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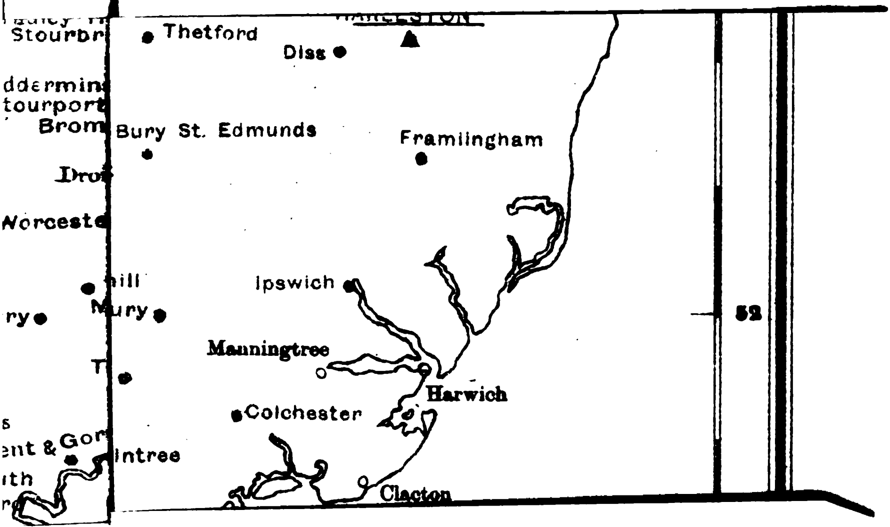
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AND

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE SIXTH NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES

Held in CARDIFF, March 11th to 14th, 1901

London:
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES
MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGDON STREET.

1901

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CONSTITUTION.

TITLE. I.—The name shall be "THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES."

The Churches constituting the local Councils entitled to representation on the National Council are the Congregational and Baptist Churches, the Methodist Churches, the Presbyterian Church of England, the Free Episcopal Churches, the Society of Friends, and such other Evangelical Churches as the National Council may at any time admit.

OBJECTS. II.—The objects of the National Council shall be—

(*a*) To facilitate fraternal intercourse and co-operation among the Evangelical Free Churches.

(*b*) To assist in the organisation of local Councils.

(*c*) To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the Churches.

(*d*) To advocate the New Testament doctrine of the Church, and to defend the rights of the associated Churches.

(*e*) To promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

MEMBERSHIP. III.—All local Councils formed in harmony with the principles of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches shall be entitled to send as many representatives—men or women—to each Annual Council as the Executive Committee shall from time to time determine.

Every local Council shall be responsible for the payment of 5s. on behalf of each representative it sends to the Annual Council.

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For the present, members—men or women—of Evangelical Free Churches may become personal members of the Annual Council on payment of the annual subscription of 5s., in such numbers as shall be from year to year determined by the Committee.

COMMITTEE.

IV.—(*a*) The Executive Committee shall consist of fifteen ministers and fifteen laymen, elected annually by the Council, together with the President, ex-President, past-Presidents, and as many Treasurers and Secretaries as the Council shall from year to year appoint.

The Executive Committee thus constituted shall have power to co-opt additional members, not exceeding ten ministers and ten laymen.

(*b*) The President of each Council shall be elected by the preceding Council on the nomination of the Chair acting on behalf of the Executive Committee, and shall enter upon his year of office at the first Session of the Council over which he presides.

In case of the inability of the President to attend the Annual Council, the ex-President, or, in his absence, a past-President, elected by the Executive Committee, shall lead the open devotional exercises, and immediately after, acting on behalf of the Executive Committee, shall nominate a President, who, on his election, shall forthwith assume the Chair and all its duties.

Should any President die or be incapacitated during his year of office, his place shall be taken by the ex-President, or, failing him, by any past-President selected by the Executive Committee.

(*c*) The Treasurers and Secretaries shall be elected by the Annual Council on the nomination of the Executive Committee.

All vacancies in the office of Treasurer or Secretary that may occur in the interval of the annual meetings of the Council shall be filled by the Executive Committee.

(*d*) The Executive Committee shall be elected by ballot from persons nominated by the Executive Committee of the preceding year, or by not less than three representative members of the Council. These nominations must be made on the opening day of the Annual Council.

(*e*) In addition to the regular meetings of the Executive Committee, the Committee may be summoned at any time by the President, or on the requisition of ten of its members.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

V.—Any amendment of the Constitution must be made either on the motion of the Executive Committee or on the motion of a representative member of the National Council. Notice of any such constitutional amendment by a representative member must be given to the General Secretary at least one month before the opening day of the Annual Council. All proposed constitutional amendments must be presented in print to every member of the Annual Council on its opening day.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

VI.—Suggested constitutional amendments and all notices of motion must be approved by the Executive Committee as suitable for discussion before they can be presented to the Annual Council.

Extract from Resolution on the Treasurer's Statement (1897).—That the resolution reported from the Committee as adopted by it on June 23rd last, that "the minimum annual contribution from each local Council to the funds of the National Council be 10s., and that for each representative sent to the Annual Council there be a further contribution of 5s.," is confirmed by the National Council.

DATES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

1901—THURSDAY, March 28th.
1901—MONDAY, June 3rd.
1901—MONDAY, October 7th.
1901—MONDAY, December 2nd.*
1902—MONDAY, February 10th.
1902—MONDAY, March 10th.*

*** The Committee ordinarily meets in the Board Room, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The December meeting will probably be held in the provinces, and the March one will be held at Bradford.**

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 1901-1902.

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Ex-President:

Rev. CHARLES H. KELLY.

Past Presidents:

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Rev. J. Monro Gibson, M.A., D.D.
Rev. John Clifford, M.A., D.D.
Rev. A. Mackennal, B.A., D.D.

Treasurers:

Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P. | Mr. George Cadbury
Mr. Alderman Evan Spicer, J.P., L.C.C. (Chairman of Finance Committee)

Hon. Secretary:

Rev. J. Monro Gibson, M.A., D.D.

Organising Secretary:

Rev. Thomas Law, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Committee:

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,, Thomas Allen
,, Dr. Barrett
,, F. W. Bourne
,, R. J. Campbell, B.A.
,, W. Cuff
,, George Eayrs
,, Dr. R. Glover
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Dr.

BALANCE SHEET,

LIABILITIES.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Sundry Creditors				1,290	11	9
„ Capital Account, February 1st, 1900	1,262	7	9			
Add Balances from Revenue Account	600	19	3			
„ „ Publication Account	1,467	8	2			
				3,330	15	2
				£4,621	6	11

Dr.

PUBLICATION ACCOUNT for the

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Stock at February 1st, 1900				259	2	10
„ Printing, Engraving, Cost of Paper, Binding, &c.	4,126	18	11			
„ Office Printing and Stationery	49	16	7			
„ Carriage	73	17	7			
„ Postages	89	4	6			
„ Discounts paid	56	19	8			
„ Salaries	462	19	7			
„ Rent, Rates and Taxes	78	10	10			
„ Advertising	40	18	0			
				4,979	5	8
Balance to Balance Sheet				1,467	8	2
				£6,705	16	8

January 31st, 1901. Cr.

ASSETS.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
By Cash at Bank—		
On Deposit Account	450 0 0	
On Current Account	355 7 8	
		805 7 8
,, Sundry Debtors		2,400 2 6
,, Office Furniture	206 4 1	
Less Depreciation	30 18 9	
		175 5 4
,, Stock of Publications, Blocks, &c.		1,240 11 5
		£4,621 6 11

Twelve Months ending January 31st, 1901. Cr.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
By Sales	5,358 17 1	
Less Returns	80 10 6	
		5,278 6 7
,, Advertisements		186 18 8
,, Stock on hand, January 31st, 1901		1,240 11 5
		£6,705 16 8

Dr. REVENUE ACCOUNT for the

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Donations	1,365	12	0			
,, Subscriptions	512	14	0			
,, Special Donations for Grants to Federations as per contra	625	0	0			
				2,503	6	0
,, Delegates' Fees				220	9	6
,, Personal Membership Fees				33	14	0
,, Affiliated Fees				218	7	6
,, Receipts from Missions				1,793	0	7
,, Continental Services				29	12	0
,, Interest on Deposit Account				13	12	1
,, Special Donations *re* Dr. Paton's Prayer Union Scheme				20	0	0
				£4,832	1	8

Twelve Months ending January 31st, 1901. Cr.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Deputation Expenses	247	3	11			
,, Initial Expenses of forming New Federations, &c.	15	14	4			
,, Circulating Library..	30	13	9			
,, Special Grants to Federations as per contra ..	625	0	0			
,, Annual Council	157	8	6			
,, Simultaneous Mission and Propaganda Gratis Literature..	446	14	7			
,, Legal and Professional Expenses..	21	0	0			
,, Salaries of Office Staff and Missioners	1,928	10	11			
,, Travelling Expenses of Missioners	111	19	2			
,, Continental Services	90	15	3			
,, General Office Expenses	85	7	0			
,, General Council Expenses..	40	11	4			
,, Stereo Columns to Newspapers	45	16	7			
,, Postages and Telegrams	113	17	2			
,, Rent, Rates, Taxes and Insurance	170	2	9			
,, Dr. Paton's Prayer Union Scheme, Printing, &c.	18	5	1			
,, Printing, Stationery and Office Expenses ..	49	16	7			
,, Depreciation of Furniture	30	18	9			
,, Girls' Guild Printing, &c.	1	6	9			
				4,231	2	5
Balance to Balance Sheet				600	19	3
				£4,832	1	8

EVAN SPICER,
Chairman of Finance Committee.

Auditors' Certificate.—We hereby certify that we have examined the above Account with the Books, Counterfoil Receipt Books, and Vouchers of the Council, and find the same to be in accordance therewith. We have also verified the Balance at the Bankers on Deposit and Current Accounts.

GERARD VAN DE LINDE & SON, *Auditors,*
Chartered Accountants.

London, *March 1st,* 1901.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, 1900–1901.

	£	s.	d.
Arnold, F., Esq.	1	1	0
Armitt, J., Esq.	0	5	0
Ackroyd, T. R., Esq.	0	2	6
Banks, Kirby, Coun.	2	2	0
Billing, J., Esq.	0	2	6
Barnes, R., Esq.	0	10	0
Bowes, J. B., Esq.	1	1	0
Benham, W. J., Esq.	1	1	0
Cory, J., Esq.	100	0	0
Cooper, J. O., Esq.	0	10	6
Caple, C. A., Esq.	0	5	0
Cooper, H., Esq.	1	1	0
Cooke, H., Esq.	0	10	0
Duckworth, Ald., J.P.	100	0	0
Darby, Dr.	0	10	0
Griffiths, R. W. S., Esq.	5	0	0
Heap, C. H., Esq.	5	0	0
Hawkinson, T. J., Esq.	1	1	0
Halsey, W., Esq.	1	1	0
Jewell, J., Esq.	0	10	0
Carried forward	221	13	6
Brought forward	221	13	6
King, E. P., Esq.	2	0	0
Lester, E. R., Esq.	0	10	6
Lovett, L., Esq.	0	2	6
McArthur, A., Esq.	2	2	0
Morton, R., Esq.	2	2	0
Mather, J., Esq.	0	10	0
Perks, R. W., Esq., M.P.	100	0	0
Pond, B. B., Esq.	0	5	0
Rickett, J. Compton, Esq., M.P.	100	0	0
Starley, J. K., Esq.	25	0	0
Stephenson, W., Esq.	0	4	6
Spicer, Evan, Esq., J.P.	50	0	0
Small, W. T., Esq.	1	1	0
Trounson, T., Esq.	1	0	0
Wheeler, H. J., Esq.	0	10	6
Wood, A. W., Esq.	0	2	6
Williamson, D., Esq.	1	1	0
Whyte, R., Esq.	4	4	0
Yonge, J. A., Esq.	0	5	0
	£512	14	0

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Addison, P., Esq.	0	10	0
Atkinson, M., Esq.	25	0	0
Akeroyd & Hume, Messrs.	0	5	0
Aston, E., Esq.	2	2	0
Austin, S., Esq.	0	5	0
Andrews, E., Esq.	1	0	0
Arnold, F., Esq.	1	1	0
Ames, R., Esq.	1	0	0
Brimelow, W., Esq.	1	1	0
Bird, R., Esq.	20	0	0
Baines, G. H., Esq.	3	3	0
Benham, W. J., Esq.	1	1	0
Bayliss, W., Esq.	1	1	0
Betts, Mrs. L.	1	0	0
B.	10	0	0
Brown, W. H., Esq.	5	0	0
Bruce, G. B., Sir	2	0	0
Brewer, J., Esq.	0	2	6
Bennett, W., Esq.	1	1	0
Bexon, A., Esq.	1	1	0
Carried forward	£77	13	6

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	77	13	6
Blackwell, J., Esq.	2	2	0
Bennett, F. S., Esq.	1	0	0
Barran, A., Esq.	1	1	0
Bates, F. W., Esq.	0	2	6
Ballard, A., Esq.	1	1	0
Barnes, J., Esq.	0	5	0
Barrett, H., Esq.	1	1	0
Bainbridge, T. H., Esq.	50	0	0
Brownhall, B., Esq.	1	1	0
Cory, R., Esq.	30	0	0
Cadbury, G., Esq.	600	0	0
Collier, E. P., Esq.	0	10	0
Corderoy, G., Esq.	1	1	0
Cloudsley, J. L., Esq.	2	2	0
Clark, D., Esq.	1	1	0
Clegg, S. E., Miss	1	1	0
Chapman, H. W., Esq.	1	1	0
Chambers, G. A., Esq.	0	10	0
Colbourne, J., Esq.	1	1	0
Carried forward	£773	14	0

DONATIONS (*continued*).

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Brought forward	773	14	0
Cox, E. Esq.	0	2	6
Craig, J. A., Esq.	1	0	0
Davies, H., Esq.	1	0	0
Dawson, W., Esq.	0	5	0
Ellis, J. E., Esq.	10	0	0
Fairbairn, A. D., Esq.	1	1	0
Freer, F. A., Esq.	1	0	0
Firth, W. E., Esq.	1	0	0
Frewent, F. J., Esq.	1	0	0
Griffiths, I. C., Esq.	1	1	0
Gammon, F., Esq.	1	0	0
Grimson, J. L., Esq.	1	0	0
Howard, J., Esq.	1	0	0
Hall, Dr.	3	3	0
Houfton, C., Esq.	0	5	0
Hammer, G. M., Esq.	2	2	0
Harrison, G., Esq.	0	10	6
Heathcote, H. J., Esq.	0	10	0
Hartley, W. P., Esq.	100	0	0
Hall & Torey, Misses	10	10	0
Carried forward	£911	4	0

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	911	4	0
Howorth, G., Esq.	5	0	0
Islip, F. W., Esq.	0	5	0
Jones, G. O., Esq.	1	1	0
Kingham, H., Esq.	1	1	0
Kelly, C. H., Rev.	1	1	0
Knight, W. E., Esq.	1	0	0
Lever, W. H., Esq.	20	0	0
Lankester, E. M., Esq.	0	2	0
Lee, G., Esq.	0	5	0
Lawrence, T. C., Esq.	10	0	0
Macdonald, C., Esq.	2	2	0
Mawson, H. T., Esq.	0	10	0
Macalpine, G. W., Esq.	1	1	0
Mounsey, E., Esq.	1	0	0
Machin, T. J., Esq.	0	5	0
May, G. H., Esq.	0	5	0
Marten, R., Esq.	0	5	0
Morgan & Scott, Messrs.	2	2	0
Malvern, F. C. C.	0	10	0
Nixon, B. B., Esq.	1	1	0
Carried forward	£960	0	0

DONATIONS (*continued*).

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Brought forward	960	0	0
Osborn, G., Esq.	0	5	0
Osborne, H., Esq.	0	5	0
Peak, H., Esq.	1	1	0
Page, J., Esq.	0	5	0
Parley, Mrs.	0	5	0
Peters, T., Esq.	0	10	0
Ransom, A., Esq.	0	10	6
Rickett, J. Compton, Esq., M.P.	100	0	0
Rogers, M., Esq.	0	10	6
Robinson, E., Esq., J.P.	5	5	0
Robinson, R., Esq.	1	0	0
Rogers, H. E., Esq.	1	1	0
Rylands, Mrs.	100	0	0
Rawlings & Butt, Messrs.	10	10	0
Ridley, O., Esq.	1	1	0
Simpson, E., Esq.	0	5	0
Smith, T., Esq.	5	5	0
Spearman, Colonel	0	10	6
Square Congregational Ch., per J. Whiteley	1	1	0
Carried forward ..	£1,189	10	6

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	1,189	10	6
Spicer, Evan, Esq., J.P.	50	0	0
Turner, A. K., Esq.	0	5	0
Taylor, S., Esq.	1	1	0
Tattersall, W., Esq.	0	10	6
Taylor, J. G., Esq.	5	0	0
Upward, E. J., Esq.	1	1	0
Williamson, J., Esq.	0	10	0
Warmington, Miss	1	1	0
Walker, W., Esq.	10	0	0
Windsor, W., Esq.	0	10	0
White, H. J., Esq.	0	5	0
Williams, W. L., Esq.	1	1	0
Wilson, S., Esq.	0	10	0
Walker, T., Esq.	1	1	0
White, G., Esq.	1	1	0
Watkinson, E., Esq., ...	0	5	0
Williams, Sir George	50	0	0
Z.X.	2	0	0
A Friend, per Dr. Gibson	50	0	0
	£1,365	12	0

RECEPTION

BY

THE PRESIDENT (MR. ROBERT BIRD, J.P.)

OF THE

CARDIFF COUNCIL.

On Monday evening, March 11th, the members of the Council, together with their hosts and hostesses, were hospitably entertained at a reception in the Park Hall, given by Mr. Robert Bird, J.P., the President of the Cardiff Council. Owing to indisposition, Mr. Bird was not able personally to receive his guests, but his son, Councillor Bird, acted in his stead, and cordially welcomed the Council to Cardiff. The Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., responded on behalf of the National Council.

Sixth National Council

OF THE

Evangelical Free Churches.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12th, 1901.

MORNING SESSION.

THE Council assembled at 9 a.m., in the Park Hall. The Rev. C. H. Kelly, the retiring President, preached the opening sermon.

THE REALITY AND VALUE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY THE REV. CHARLES H. KELLY.

"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."—ST. JOHN ix. 25.

The Bible is a great picture gallery; and one of the most notable of the great pictures in it is the one in front of which we stand this hour. What portraits are before us! What a scene is portrayed! What lessons are taught! There is the man who has been blind from birth—now able to see; glad, joyous, keen-witted, courageous, a brave confessor, one who had definite knowledge and was not afraid to declare it. There stand his parents—shrewd and calculating—who shield themselves behind their son, and are not ashamed to hide when he dares to resist the authorised clergy on a case of conscience and of common sense, of knowledge and experience. Cowards! they leave him to himself in the contest. "For fear of the Jews!" an old story—an oft-repeated experience. For "fear" of the squire and his wife and daughters; of the parson and his wife and district visitors; of the crowds of sectarian religionists and their trade custom; the man who dares to think for himself and indulge in the luxury of his own religion, is left even by his own kith and kin, for fear that they will be put out of certain social or church sets. Then there is the group of priests, scribes, pharisees, sacer-

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dotalists, conventional religionists, self-righteous men, declarers of their own superiority in knowledge, piety, and adherence to the rights of God and His Church.

> "The temple of the Lord are they,
> And heathen all beside."

Near them are the disciples of One Who is the Central Figure of all; but none of whom on this occasion was the great preacher, despite their apostleship. And, chief, foremost, there is the portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Healer of the blind, the great Teacher, the One mighty to save!

"He was born blind." What a bitter disappointment to his parents! How sad when they were told—a son, safely born, but blind! He was born into a world of beauty, yet never to see it; never to feel the rapture of looking into the heavens, blue and beautiful, with the sun in his power, or magnificent at night when studded with their thousands of stars; never to be thrilled as he gazed on the hills or stood on mountain heights, or looked on the restless ocean; never to be charmed as he traced the hand of His God in the delicate flower or the rearing of the mighty forest. "Born blind!" He never saw the faces of those whom he learned to love! A sightless babe on his mother's breast, he grew to manhood living in a world unreal. The poorest, dirtiest dwelling was as a palace for aught he knew, and the cleanly home no better than the worst.

It is very sad that anyone should be blind, but it would be sadder far if all were born blind; if the world were peopled by blind kings, blind senators, blind armies, blind merchants, blind artisans; if blindness were the universal experience. But spiritually is it not so? *Are not these miracles of Christ, parables too?* Yea, surely; *spiritually this is the universal experience;* and this miracle of the healing of the blind man by the Lord Jesus Christ is a parable and teaches great and precious truths.

There are many important lessons taught by this incident, but the one on which we wish more especially to lay stress is concerning

THE REALITY AND VALUE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

If that lesson is both taught and learnt myriads of individuals will be absolutely changed and eternally saved, the Churches will be blessed by a great revival of religion, and the community will be peopled by better citizens, by law-abiding people, and by enlightened upholders of the righteousness that exalteth a nation.

We can scarcely over-estimate the value of personal experience in Christian life. This was a notable case. Is it typical? Can men know to-day that they have had such a wonderful change? Does the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ mean something more than Church attachment—Church membership? Does it imply something more than deep personal interest in His Church—reverent, devout observance of ordinances? Can men know on earth that they have passed from death unto life, that although once spiritually blind, deaf, dumb, they have, through the power of their Saviour, been so changed that now they can see, hear, and speak? Yes, all this is possible. All this is common experience. The experience of hundreds of thousands. That being so, then we say we can scarcely over-estimate the value of personal experience in Christian life.

Because of its value the Free Churches have done well to begin the new century with a great Simultaneous Mission throughout the nation—a mission for the revival of religion by the conversion of sinners. That was better than having a lyceum of lectures on Free Church principles and aims. We have many principles to contend for, great organisations to sustain, vast interests to uphold—social, municipal, imperial, and world-wide. We do not underrate their importance. But the great reason of our existence—the "end to which we are born," "the cause for which we have been sent into the world"—is to secure the salvation of men by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All else is secondary. All else that we most desire will be accomplished if we secure that. And the great work of this great mission has been to make myriads feel what myriads—and many of us among them—had felt before: the wonderful power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in personal conversion.

Without that experience no Church can be strong. No magnificent architecture, no wealth of endowment, no intellectual, social, historic, or numerical position will suffice for any of our churches, if, having all that, we have not converting power; the work of the Holy Spirit of God, through which men can individually truthfully declare that they have passed from death unto life—had part in the first resurrection, which is the resurrection from the death of trespass and sin to the life of righteousness—and be able to declare each for himself, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The Free Churches have done well to begin the century on their knees, in humble, earnest prayer before God, and in united preaching of the Gospel. It was well that they who stood aloof so long should come together; but it was best that coming together it should not be in antagonism to other Churches, or for political propagandism, or for the glorifying of themselves—but for the great aim of winning men to Christ, and of making them realise the wonderful blessings of personal salvation.

Surely the ancient prophecy has been graciously fulfilled in the year 1901, and we rejoice over it here and now:—"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together. They shall seek the Lord their God. They shall inquire concerning Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come ye, and join yourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten."

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER MUST HAVE IT TO BE EFFECTIVE.

The importance of this personal experience is seen in Christian work in the case of the workers. Let preachers secure two things, and they will not testify in vain. These two things are: (*a*) Their own personal experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ; their ability to say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Prime qualification for a preacher of the Gospel! The man who can tell men what God has done for his own soul, is the likeliest to bring their souls to God. The man who has walked the road is the best guide. (*b*) The other is the power to make men feel that such experience is possible to all of them. Every preacher who knows the Lord as a personal Saviour, and believes in Him as the Saviour of all men; who will fill himself with the all-conquering truths of the Gospel; put his whole soul into his message, and pour it red-hot on his people—will be certain to have interested, instructed, and earnest hearers. Fill the racks with the right kind of food, and the sheep will always be found there. Fill the pulpits with such preachers, and you will fill the pews with eager hearers. One secret of many a successful ministry is just there. The preacher himself was a sinner saved by grace. And he knew it. He had a profound conviction that every sinner might be saved, and that Jesus Christ could save him. And when he preached Christ he expected men who were blind to be cured—and they were; and he heard the old cry, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

The opposite of that is too common. A Christless preacher and a Christless Gospel—no conversions. Nay, even a Christian preacher, and a Christian sort of sermon; but no expectation of saving results; no faith—no conversions. There are numbers of men who preach who never expect conversions; never expect to hear the cry of the penitent, "What must I do to be saved?" never expect to hear the jubilant exclamation, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." They never expect!—and they are never disappointed!

O, brother preachers, let us preach for conversions; let us preach with faith both in God and men! Preach expecting great results; and the Lord will honour our ministry! What a pattern this cured blind man, this witness for Jesus Christ, this preacher, is! The bulk of the preaching of to-day has many excellences; it does not lack eloquence, it does not lack scholarship, it does not lack vigour. But very often it lacks directness, boldness, frankness. Not by any means always; or generally. But often it would be far better calculated to arouse and quicken, if it were less according to "regulation shape," and less genteel,—more outspoken, like this man's utterance; if it were more like Paul's preaching before King

Agrippa, which really was the story of his conversion, the declaration of his experience.

IT IS THE SOURCE OF JOY AND COURAGE.

The definiteness of an experience such as this is delightful. It gives joy to the person who has it, and comfort and assurance; and is most helpful and encouraging to others. It is in striking contrast to such an utterance as that of John Newton's hymn—

" 'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?"

It is more in harmony with Charles Wesley's ringing hymn—

" My God, I am Thine,
What a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!

" In the Heavenly Lamb
Thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His Name."

It was this personal experience that made the man so valiant. So long as such experience continues—and it will continue—so long will Christ have His faithful ones who will live, and if need be die, for Him. His cause will be upheld. When men sneer, predict the failure of our cause, the death of our principles, we never fear. Only let men and women be personally converted; and then the future is safe. When we are told that the enemies of truth are many and their attacks are bold, we never fear. Give us the continued presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God, and all is well. Let conversions continue, and the personal experience of men enable them to say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see"; and we never fear. Thank God there are tens of thousands of us to-day—and our successors are close at hand—who do and will confess Christ; and confess Him in our own way; who, amid the atheism, the agnosticism, the indifference of the age, are going to stick to the old Gospel, to stand by the old truths—the Gospel of the Incarnation, the Gospel of Atonement and Sacrifice, the Gospel of a Resurrection. We are "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."

IT IS THE INSPIRATION FOR DUTY.

What a fine example this man sets us! He takes the side of Jesus without staying to consider whether Jesus is on his side in the dispute or not. Latterly the question has been often asked—especially in ephemeral literature, "What would Jesus do if He were to come?"

For practical purposes in a crisis or in daily duty, and in this new century, it is far more important for us to ask, "What would Jesus have me to do?" Be sure of this, He would have us to do many things that He would not do Himself—that He could not do. He could not have said what this man said, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." We may be sure that He will always be on the right side. Let us be most anxious about ourselves on that matter, for there are many men who are far more desirous to have God or truth on their side, than themselves to be on the side of God and truth. A deputation of clergymen once called on Abraham Lincoln—great son of America!—when one of the members said, "I hope, Mr. President, that God is on our side!" To which the President replied, "I have not concerned myself with that question"; adding, after the shock of surprise had been well effected, "but I have been very solicitous that we should be on God's side."

Now, as then, mere professionalists object, even in the front of manifest spiritual changes and life. Their number is only exceeded by their impertinence. When witnesses against them are too many; when the personal testimony of the saved man is too strong and distinct; and when people become impatient with their puerile pretensions; then they profess superior knowledge, and an experience of their own that defies a test. The man fails to convince or persuade, and finds that threats are laughed at; and then looking graver than a judge, and wiser than anyone ever was, he solemnly says, "Ah! but if you only knew what I know!" Know what they know, indeed! This man really did know; these men did not—and the like of them do not—know. They are ignorant of truth; and, almost worse, they are ignorant of their own ignorance.

This sort of thing failed with the blind man of Jerusalem, as it has failed with many since; and so the opponents try again and say, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner!" How history repeats itself! If you cannot deny the reality of a man's work, blacken his character! If you cannot disprove the fact that he was a great missionary, call him "a consecrated cobbler"; if you have neither brain nor grace enough to write a "Pilgrim's Progress," call its writer a "wretched tinker" . . . and then, when you have done it, go and stand where you ought to stand—among the priests, scribes, and pharisees, who said of the cobbler's Master, and the tinker's Saviour, "We know that this man is a sinner!" Then was the cured man's opportunity. Then came his brave reply: "Whether He be a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." There is no gainsaying the fact. Yesterday—nay, even this morning—as in all my life before—I was blind; I could not see the sun, the sky, the sea; I could not see the mountain, the city, the temple; I could not see my father, my mother. I could not see a wise man if he were present, or a fool—who undoubtedly was present; but now I can see them all. I can see you—even you! "I *was* blind, but *now* I see."

IT IS THE CONCLUSIVE ARGUMENT FOR RELIGION.

This personal experience was the strong argument used by the cured blind man, and his defence, against the theologians, ecclesiastics, and society folks who assailed him. Its like is needed to-day for similar service. These opponents professed to doubt if he had been blind and then cured. But that would not do. There were too many witnesses to the fact. He testified himself. His wretchedly cowardly parents even, and the crowd, were all witnesses. All Jerusalem knew it; he was a notorious beggar; they had seen him, poor blind fellow, begging scores of times; but now they saw that he could see.

Oh, the value of a trophy like that! We have thousands of such in England to-day! The outside crowds are witnesses to the fact of the wonderful change! And one converted sinner, one changed life, is worth more than a whole library of apologetics and learned treatises in favour of Christianity—immensely valuable as these are. Such experience as that of this man and of converted sinners influences the outside world as nothing else can. Men that will not read their Bible, nor works on the Evidences of the Christian Religion, will read these living epistles in workshops and homes. It is always so. A man does not need to be a saint in order to appreciate the change that conversion makes in other men. Not long ago a set sneered about a Wesleyan revival; but an unbelieving tradesman said: "Whether you approve or not, I do; for since the revival nearly every bad debt in my trade books has been paid." Certainly; in such a case paying debts and being honest is better than singing "Hallelujah!" It is an experience, a revival, that the outside world can understand and appreciate. Well, the crowd in Jerusalem took up the defence. With Christ's trophy before them, they hurled back the sneers of the priestly rabble, and cried, "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?"

Then the objectors shift their ground. They fall back on their office; their exclusive knowledge; their prerogative; they could not admit that such a miracle could be performed by an unauthorised person; by one who was not a priest, not a scribe, not in the proper line and order of ecclesiastical officialism.

We have such men still. There was a time in John Wesley's life in which he would not believe that a sinner could be saved out of church. There are sets of men now, one of which would admit of no true blessing other than that which would come through the orders of Rome; another of Lambeth, or its like; another of Geneva; and others from other exclusive fountains—for we have as full grown bigots among Free Churchmen so called, as you will find elsewhere. "One thing I know, that *whereas I was blind, now I see.*"

IT HAS ITS SOCIAL FRUITS.

That sort of experience is of great social importance. This man, depend upon it, ceased to sit as a beggar. Christ's religion is the greatest social reformer. Even its enemies do not seek beggars, thieves, pariahs of society among Church members. When the Lord has opened the eyes of such they become respectable members of the community. Their seat is in the Temple among worshippers, and not at the gate asking alms.

In these days of sacerdotal claims; of priestly pretensions; of ecclesiastical exclusiveness, *let us note the value of a layman's testimony*—the immense value of the experience of a saved man. Multiply such converts, and the Church will be strengthened. Get such preachers, and believers will be multiplied. This sort of experience is the best antidote to the poisonous teaching of mere priests; a strong bulwark against the small men who persecute and would excommunicate people for conscience sake. Heresy, gross religious intolerance, generally spring rather from the priest than the layman.

This sort of experience has always proved to be one of the chief items of interest and power in the history and life of Evangelical Free Churches. We must cultivate it. It is good for its individual possessor; good for the Churches; good for the world. Where it is earnestly declared, a great inner mission to the world is secured. It is destructive to the claims of men, who, despite their official rank, and knowledge of theology as a science, and, may be, even their high scholarship, are ignorant of the joy of spiritual life; who are blind when they think they can see. But let this sort of experience cease; let conscious salvation die down; let the Witness of the Spirit be ignored; and then men will be driven to rely on the priest—the sacraments—the mere externals.

And now what more have I to say? Most of you are Christian believers, walking in the light. May God ever lift upon you the light of His countenance! May you ever be His true, faithful witnesses! But are there any blind, spiritually blind, people here? If so, and you wish to be cured, to-day you have a glorious opportunity. The Saviour is here also. The very same Jesus Who sent this man to the Pool of Siloam, is in our midst. He is here to heal; here to save. As near as was the light; as near as Jesus Christ was to the blind man in his darkness before the cure; so near is He to you and me this moment. Cry to Him, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" He will say, "Receive thy sight!" Ye men of God, ye men of prayer, cry to Him on their behalf! and He will hear and answer; and people will henceforth say as they never could before, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see!"

O, Jesus! Who didst give sight to the blind Jerusalem beggar; give spiritual sight to some here and now! Thou only canst! But Thou canst! Repeat Thy marvels of grace and mercy to-day in our midst. Make this the place; make this the hour of personal conversion! We are shut up to Thee for salvation!

> "Whither shall the lost one flee?
> Who can set the captive free?
> Who can heal the bruised stem?
> Who can cleanse the darkened gem?
> Thou! Whose infant forehead pressed
> Mary's meek maternal breast;
> Thou! Whose voice from darkness won
> The poor widow's only son;
> Thou! upon Whose feet beloved
> Mary's tears fell unreproved;
> Thou! Whose dying eye could melt
> O'er the pangs a mother felt;
> Jesus Saviour! woman born!
> Strange to sin, as strange to scorn;
> 'Neath the shadow of Thy wing
> All our broken hearts may cling;
> Pouring all their deep emotion,
> All their passionate devotion,
> Bitter tears and sobbing sweet,
> As an ointment on Thy feet."

INDUCTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT,

REV. J. G. GREENHOUGH, M.A.

At the conclusion of the sermon the outgoing President (the Rev. C. H. Kelly) vacated the chair, and formally welcomed the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., as his successor to the greatest honour that the Council can bestow upon its best men. Mr. Kelly congratulated his brother upon having attained a position so worthy, and he congratulated the Council upon its choice of one so eminently fitted for the duties of the office.

Mr. GREENHOUGH suitably responded and then delivered the following address:—

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

THE UNIFYING FORCES OF THE TIMES.

In one of the least read chapters of the book of Chronicles, half buried in dusty tables of names and figures, there is a peculiar gem which every preacher finds by instinct and uses to adorn a homily or suggest a prayer. It speaks of certain mighty men of valour who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. They were men with clear heads and brave hearts. They knew what needed to be done, and they had daring enough to do it. These qualities are always in demand, and when they meet in the same person they make a great man and the God-sent leader. The two things, unhappily, are not always combined.

Some men like Erasmus—it is safer not to mention modern names—have perspicacity without courage—wise heads with fluttering, timid hearts. They understand the times, the trend of thought, the finger-pointings of God; they know exactly what ought to be done, if someone else would do it; but when it comes to the point of action, they prefer to sit still in easy chairs, scolding the world for not standing up, and "letting I dare not wait upon I would." And some like Archbishop Laud—again it is more prudent to use old names—have courage without perspicacity; they are behind the times. The wheels of thought are moving on, perhaps with the spirit of God in the wheels, and they consume all their zeal in pushing them back, upholding some worn-out worthless cause, and occasionally fighting against God in the name of God. The men whom the world needs and the Church needs have boldness and clear vision combined, the open eyes, the resolute will and the fearless heart. In this age of clever mediocrity, talents without genius, statesmanship without religious convictions, and leaders who watch the weather-cock, we may well pray God to send us a few such giants to-day. These men had understanding of the times. They saw that the great need of Israel was a rallying point, a common cry and union. For a long weary period there had been misrule, anarchy, and weakness, because there had been no central government and no binding force. The twelve tribes had stood apart, consumed with jealousy, and each one fighting for its own hand. The want of co-operation had made them an easy prey to Midianite, Philistine, and sundry other fierce neighbours. No man had appeared with attraction enough to gather them round one banner. But at length the times were ripe for a change. All the best hearts in the nation were weary of divisions, petty enmities, and perpetual unrest. They wanted a man who could gather and cement together the broken and scattered forces, and thus present a solid front to the enemy, and save the nation from bleeding to death—a want which political and other parties occasionally experience now. Such a man God sent in David, a born leader, a master of men, a king by force of genius and greater force of faith, a charming personality who could inspire trust and passionate devotion, for whom men would willingly fight and even die. All the wise-hearted ones saw that in him they had found the needed bond of union. And they came to him with the rallying cry, "One people and one cause, with David as our king." Now all these men died and were buried three thousand years ago, and are only mentioned once in those dusty records. Yet these things live again, because the new times often bring back the old conditions, repeat the same human problems, and demand the same solutions.

No men have understanding of our times who do not see everywhere and under every other force and tendency an irresistible movement towards co-operation, combination, collectivism, solidarity, centralisation—call it by what philosophical name you please, or, if you are content with simpler things, call it the unity for which certain divine lips prayed. The world is rapidly revising its arithmetic, and putting addition and multiplication before subtraction and division. It is discovering that while one may chase a hundred, if the hundred will run, five can put ten thousand to flight. It is discovering that where two or three are agreed in prayer, or anything else, the resulting force is not three times one, but the square or cube of three. It is astonishing that with all our cleverness we have only just discerned those elementary simplicities, which the Bible announced thousands of years ago. They knew a few things down in Judæa better than we know them in London and Cardiff.

But now on every side, and in innumerable ways, men are coming together, joining hands, and striving, as the heart of one man, for common ends. The whole bent of thought, and what we call the spirit of the age, point straight in that direction. All forces, whether commercial, economical, political, social, or religious, are grouping themselves into large masses, into armies and battalions, for united action. The movement is universal, multiform, and irresistible. It is constantly asserted that we are all Socialists now. Some of us might object to be thus classed. Yet this much may be admitted—that though the Socialist's Utopia is still a creation of dreamland, his practical proposals are sweeping the extreme individualist from the field. Individual enterprise is being increasingly relieved of its functions by the corporation and municipality, which will presently be doing everything for us, except giving birth to our babies.

Aggregation, cohesion, and centripetal action, are the dominating factors of the modern world. Workmen are federated into trades unions. Capitalists are joining in huge syndicates. Nations and races are feeling the pulses of a sympathetic oneness and brotherhood. Great empires are building themselves up out of smaller principalities and peoples. Colonies and Motherland are being drawn together in closest bonds of kinship. Men of the same language and descent, though divided by Atlantics, are forgetting old enmities and jealousies, and realising all that they have in common. These are but examples of the general trend of events.

Needless to say, the movement is not entirely healthy. Size is not always solidity. A head may be expanded by disease as well as enlarged by wisdom. God is great, but magnitude is not necessarily Divine. The trade combinations which create a few millionaires, and crush a thousand smaller tradesmen, increase the sum of wealth, but do not hasten the golden age. The survival of the fittest is sometimes the apotheosis of the unfit.

The first great combine of which we have any historical mention is one recorded in the Book of Exodus, promoted, of course, by a clever Jew, in which a number of foolish dupes invested their possessions, only to produce and worship one golden calf; and that little episode, with the abject adoration which followed, is likely to be repeated often in our own times.

Union is strength, but strength may foster pride and vainglorying, and the giant sometimes uses his strength without mercy. Empire is always grandly imposing, until it degenerates like some French Empire into an imposture. One strong kingdom like David's is better than twelve jarring and warring tribes, but if it is bound together by chains of force, instead of cords of love, it is no great gain, and will have no long continuance. I touch a question here on which it will require the greatest ingenuity to keep clear of thorny ground. I will endeavour to walk circumspectly, and not as the foolish. I suppose we are all Imperialists now, though some do not like the word because of its doubtful associations. I mean that we accept with gratitude and soberness the expansion which has been forced upon us as a nation, and its inevitable burden of responsibility. I do not think that Free Churchmen are more guilty than others of the craven fear of being great, and I claim for all of them the sincerest patriotism, and repudiate with scorn the notion that any political or religious party has a monopoly of that virtue. Free Churchmen love their dear, dear land only less than they love their God, and it may be that they are more anxious than some others to make and keep it worthy of their love. We are patriots, and we have not yet reached the sublime self-abnegation of those who apologise for being Englishmen; but the patriotism which flings its gibes at all other nations is not that which we have learned at the feet of Jesus. And the imperialism of the music-hall, with its frothy bravado and perpetual twanging on the jingo guitar, is as far removed from ours as heaven is unlike that other place which polite lips never mention now.

I trust that when these troubled times are over, the Free Churches will be able to agree on an Imperial policy. It is a consummation for which we may reverently employ prayer. But meanwhile we would have it understood that empire does not mean with us, merely or chiefly, aggrandisement, extended commerce, and riches ceaseless, but power and opportunity for righteous ends. We are religiously proud of the dominions on which the sun never sets, because we hold them as a trust from God; but we have still more pride in the hope and prayer that they may serve His purpose in the earth, and that, over all these lands and peoples, the Sun of Righteousness may ere long shine.

It is needful thus to remember that there are perils and disease spots in the universal movements towards massing and co-operation. Every great change and forward march involves some loss, and brings temptation to abuse and excess. Yet we believe that, on the whole, it is divinely ordered. The wheels move where the Spirit goes. It is all tending towards a far-off human brotherhood, helping to bring on the day when nations and men shall see eye to eye, and recognise that God has made them one family.

Now it may be a surprise to some to hear of syndicates and empires in the same breath with religious federations. One would hardly class them as children of the same mother. Yet, in fact, they are brought to us on the same one tidal wave of human emotion and thought. The Church of Christ has felt not least, but perhaps most, the unifying pulses of the times. Our assembly to-day represents one warm, generous Gulf-stream amid the manifold currents of the human ocean which are all surging in one direction. But it is a nobler and sweeter current than the rest, because it is reverently conscious of the Divine power which guides and controls it. We view with wondering gratitude the prodigious strides towards Christian unity which have been made within our own brief memories. That which was to our fathers a pious dream, a cloud-capped palace in the air, has become to us a house with solid foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Half our differences are forgotten and the rest are measured at their true value by thoughtful and generous minds. The dividing mountains have been lowered to the level of walls, and the deep rivers shallowed down to fordable brooks. We recognise and insist on certain limits. Between Rome and Gospel freedom there is the same gulf fixed now as of old. Nothing can bridge that over except the return of Rome to Christ. We cherish no vain delusions in that direction. Our *non possumus* is as distinct as that of the Vatican. The infallibility of an official is the dethronement of our spiritual King; and priestcraft can no more keep company with the glorious liberty of the children of God, than light can have fellowship with darkness, or Belial join hands with Christ. And in this connection I interpose to say that we shall watch with careful and jealous eyes any attempts which may be made to tamper with the Protestant succession to the Crown; and though some of us might not be unwilling to have the language of a certain oath modified, we shall resist with united force every proposal to abrogate or change the substance of it.

But all who are heirs of the Reformation are irresistibly approaching each other. Protestant Christians shake hands where their fathers fought, and thank God that they have learnt common-sense in the school of charity. In all healthy and unprejudiced minds, in all hearts which are sufficiently free from official bandages to yield to the influences of the Cross, there is an increasing weariness of division, a growing shame because of the scandal that it causes, a deepening prayerfulness that its wounds may be healed and its weakness removed. The wise and earnest men in every church—Free and Established—are raising and responding to the cry for peace, friendship, and brotherhood.

The laity are often larger-hearted and more far-seeing than their so-called teachers. They are often ready to kiss the brethren whom the ecclesiastic anathematises. It is Clericalism alone, stiffened in haughty isolation behind its State monopolies, that stands forth as the enemy of unity. A State-endowed Clericalism never does and never can have understanding of the times, and, therefore, it blindly resists the incoming tide, blindly and vainly. For the tide still sweeps on, though fussy Sacerdotalism is busy with besom pushing it back. Christ living and breathing in men's hearts is mightier than surplice and mitre, dusty traditions and fossilised forms. Sensible men are everywhere laughing at clerical assumptions and exclusiveness. The humour of it is irresistible except to those whose profession binds them to take it seriously. Men who say, "We are the Church, the authorised teachers, and there are no others," must surely laugh secretly in each others' faces as the old Roman soothsayers did.

They may boast of Apostolic succession and historical continuity, but they are much more likely to be regarded as in the line of pharisaical continuity, for they have borrowed far more from the gentlemen who wore phylacteries than from the fishermen whom Christ inspired. But here is the significant fact, that while all other Protestant forces in the land are yielding fully and joyfully to this great divine thought, there is one Church which stands alone in obstructing, not because it has no wise minds and understanding hearts, but because, when State fetters are worn, the heart cannot follow its sympathies, and the mind distrusts its own light. The Church of the nation has become the prime dissenter of the nation, the great schismatic. Everywhere else sectarianism is dying; there it survives in its cold, haughty, unlovely strength—setting up in every town and village its symbol of strife and division, and perpetuating envy, pride, malice, and all uncharitableness; separating fellow-citizens and fellow-Christians by lines more exasperating than any other which classes, parties, or politics know; refusing even a mingling of tears in times of great national mourning; dividing men at birth and wedding, in school and social life, in philanthropies and charities; pushing them asunder when they kneel at God's feet in prayer, and even following them to the cemetery to thrust their dust apart when Death the great reconciler has said its final word of peace. We may well ask how long a spiritual institution will consent to degrade itself into a root of bitterness like this for the sake of secular privilege. We grieve to think that the noble spirits and divine forces in that Church are so terribly crippled and perverted. And for the sake of all that it might be and do, and for the sake of that vaster fellowship of Christ-loving people which would almost regenerate this land, we pray continually that God may loose it from its bonds and let it go. And we are sure, in spite of all obstructions, that the movement towards the larger Christian unity proceeds with ever increasing volume and power, and all men are working for that end who have understanding of the times.

Now, when I look for the underlying cause of this new religious federation, I am carried back again to that old story with which I commenced. The twelve tribes of Israel, with all their scattered and jealous units, were gathered together and crystallised about David. This man became, for the time being, as God to them, the mighty magnet drawing them from every side, the strong inspiring personality in the love of whom their enmities found a grave. It is not too much to say that the strongest and most perfect unions among men are always formed in this way, around a personality. Faith believes in Him, love exalts Him, hope glorifies Him, and there is a gathering around His feet. Men are not joined so much by platforms, shibboleths, isms, and party cries, as by the attractive force of a leader whom they absolutely trust and unreservedly love. A uniting name is omnipotent, the absence of a name means paralysis. In national and political affairs we are all waiting and longing for such a commanding name in these distracted and distracting times. When will he come? In religious matters the longing has been fully satisfied; we have all found again Him Whom our souls love. The whole of the movement towards Christian union is based in the supreme exaltation of a person. It is Christ and Christ alone who is uniting us. We have restored Him to His supremacy in theology. Modern theology is Christ and nothing else. He is there, both centre and circumference. The clouds of dogma, definition, and metaphysics have passed away, and in the clear heavenly light we see Jesus only. Sects and parties are being unconsciously welded together in the furnace of His love, and all other masters are stepping aside to make Him all in all. The divisions of the past arose from the hiding of His form behind doctors, theologians, and creed makers. Men wrangled about His teachings until they forgot the Teacher, and even in interpreting the Cross they almost lost sight of the Crossbearer.

Paul and Peter were made more prominent than their Master, and the preaching of the Gospel left out the Gospels. Disputes about His divinity raised blinding dust about His form divine. Sacraments were exalted above His sacred person. Correct views were of infinitely more importance than a vision of the King in His beauty. Questions of Church government shoved out the Church's Lord, and in pursuing them infinitely little men left behind them the infinitely great. Now, thank God, all that is gone as a dream when one awaketh. For fifteen centuries the Church has been fighting for isms. The Church of the twentieth century is going to fight for Christ. We have lifted His name above every name, and made it the rallying cry. No other name has any power. Religious schools and their founders are slipping into the shady background to give all the room to Him. The only creeds we reverence and swear by are those which we get from His lips, and the lips of those who were inspired to know Him best. We have forsaken human channels for the fountain head. The theologies which interest us are those which show us His face and help us to understand His work. We care not for others and nothing moves us deeply but the thoughts which He uttered, the Masterhood which He claimed and the sufferings which glorified Him and redeemed us. Thus we are coming together at the feet of the King, kneeling at the Cross, beholding the glory, confessing that He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely; we are realizing the unity for which He prayed.

And here one cannot help discerning, among the sign of the times, a tendency towards deeper faith on fewer foundations. Faith has gained in intensity by concentrating its scattered forces. It has unconsciously withdrawn from barren and debatable outlying districts, that it might hold with firmer grip the vital points. A wasteful diffusion has given place to a wise conservation of energy. We are witnessing an unmistakable deepening of religious feeling and belief in nearly all classes of the community, and especially in what is more distinctively called the Christian world. The pendulum of thought has slowly swung from the negative to the positive pole. Destructive criticism has fallen from a commanding place to a more modest background. Agnosticism is no longer the fashionable philosophy. Its stock phrases have become decidedly threadbare and outworn. A little while ago every fledgeling from the nursery was spreading his wings to the tune of "Behold we know not anything," as if anyone needed to be informed of that. Every puny whipster fresh from school, was authoritatively declaiming, "There lives more faith in honest doubts, believe me, than in half the creeds." We heard these oracular utterances in the cacklings of every goose. That amusing exhibition is a thing of the past. Men no longer cast off the garments of faith and glory in their nakedness. There is a saner anxiety to be decently clothed, and the feet which were climbing nowhither on clouds, are feeling under them a bit of rock again. But the rock, while it spreads itself out less, goes deeper. The multiplicity of beliefs has been reduced to a smaller number of unshakeable certainties. We have ceased to be sure of everything, but we are more mightily sure of some things.

The intricacies of complicated creeds no longer charm and puzzle. We are content to leave such human contrivances as the Thirty-nine Articles to the only service for which they are now reserved, the administering to aspirants for holy orders of the forty stripes save one. Yet we know Whom we have believed. The Free Churches particularly are marching confidently, as the Apostles did, to the music of the words "we know"; they are more securely fixed than ever on the grand evangelical truths; there is no uncertain ring in our testimony concerning the incarnate mysteries, the deity of our Lord, the saving efficacy of His Calvary, the might of His Resurrection, and the regenerating forces of the Holy Ghost.

We have been equipped afresh for the warfare by the concentration and solidifying of our beliefs. We have laid aside the cumbrous and useless armour, to wield the few real weapons of the saints.

We all believe substantially the same things, we believe them intensely, we bear our witness to the world with one voice. We go forth to the conflict united as we have never been before—one army, one watchword, one leader, and one purpose; and in this union around the everlasting verities of Jesus, there is strength and assurance of victory.

I remind you, finally, of one remaining feature of the widespread drawing together of forces and men. The Church has been drawn most wonderfully towards the world—not, I trust, in spirit and temper, but in sympathy and pitiful kinship. It has learned to read the deeper meaning of the Master's words: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We have felt the pulses of our great human brotherhood. We have realised that everyone of woman born is a child of God and a soul for whom Christ died, and the Saviour's love for the best and the worst has taken possession of those who call Him their Elder Brother. A new passion for souls has swept through God's believing host.

We believe more tenderly and hopefully in men, because we believe more thoroughly and whole-heartedly in Christ. The Church is no longer outside the world, but in it. Pharisaical separation has given place to Christ's pure consorting with publicans and sinners, and the phylacteries have been put off for the girdle of ministering love. The Church no longer runs away from the evil of the world to keep its own sanctities undefiled, but boldly grapples with the evil, and by that very conflict keeps its thoughts and weapons bright and pure. We have re-read the old doctrine of election and discovered in it a divine calling and *choosing* to Christ-like burden-bearing and saving pities. We have translated into a solemn responsibility what was only a self-pampering indulgence, and have stamped with the Cross and the seal of self-forgetting that which was labelled private property. The whole Church has had its heart enlarged with the true spirit of Calvary. The question "What must I do to be saved?" is half forgotten in the nobler question, "What can I do to save the world?" We understand at length our God-appointed work, that the mission of the Church is not mainly or directly to edify itself and nurse its own virtues, but to preserve its sweetness by salting the earth, and renew its power continually by making itself the one great aggressive and attacking force against the world's darkness, guilt, and sorrow. With these new weapons which are only the old weapons, with these new thoughts which are only the thoughts that Jesus spoke, with these larger aims and broadened views, and with that spirit of oneness which is Christ's latest gift to us we advance without misgiving to the work and warfare of the new century. There are many who await with unsteady and even quaking minds the things which lie hid in the coming years. Like the disciples, they fear as they enter into the cloud. A pessimism without cause seems to have crept over the multitude of faint hearts, a sort of malaria confined to the lower levels. It does not reach up to those who walk with Jesus on the hills of faith. The Church of Christ is blessedly free from it. At least some of us have no taste or trace of it whatever. God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of love and judgment and of a sound mind. We believe in our calling, we know that He is faithful Who has called us. We are sure that wherever the way points we shall have Him with us as leader; and we simply pray that we may have light to see and courage to follow and be men, like "these men of valour who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do."

WELCOME TO CARDIFF.

A deputation representing the Cardiff Free Church Council appeared upon the platform to welcome the National Council to Cardiff. The deputation consisted of Mr. Robert Bird, J.P., Mr. John Cory, J.P., D.L., Mr. Lewis Williams, J.P., Mr. Samuel Bennett, Rev. H. M. Hughes, and Rev. W. E. Winks.

Mr. Robert Bird, president of the Cardiff Council, was the spokesman of the deputation. He hoped the air of that part of the country would agree with them—he called it the Nonconformist atmosphere. He trusted that the coming of the National Council to Cardiff would not only be a pleasure to its members, but prove a benediction to the town. The formation of the Council he had hoped would produce a more vigorous Nonconformity—that they should not be afraid to say or to do what was clearly their duty. There never was a time when Nonconformists were more united. Of the Nonconformity of Cardiff they were justly proud, and he commended to his hearers "The History of Nonconformity in Cardiff," a good book, written by two of his townsmen who had worked for pleasure, not for monetary profit. They as Nonconformists did not agree with the methods of the Church of England, but among the clergy were many noble doers of God's work. Such an one they had in Cardiff—a clergyman broad-minded, fearless in his advocacy and espousal of what he believed to be right. Canon Thompson had worked amongst them for thirty years, and he was sorry to say that he was shortly leaving for London.

The President suitably acknowledged the welcome.

ILLNESS OF THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

On the suggestion of the Rev. Thomas Law, a telegram of sympathy was ordered to be sent to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes in his illness.

FUNERAL OF THE REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Council agreed that Dr. Mackennal, Dr. Guinness Rogers, and Rev. J. Baillie should attend as a deputation at the funeral of the Rev. Urijah Thomas, of Bristol.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KING EDWARD VII.

The Rev. THOMAS ALLEN, D.D., President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, moved the following address to the King:—

"TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

May it please Your Majesty.

We, The National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England and Wales assembled in general meeting, approach Your Majesty with much respect to assure you of our sincere and hearty loyalty on the accession of Your Majesty to this ancient and illustrious throne. In common with all your faithful subjects we share in the sorrow of Your Majesty at the loss of that great Monarch our late beloved Sovereign, Queen Victoria, one whose motherhood comprehended all classes and peoples in Her vast realm. The foundations of Her throne rested deep in the love of Her subjects, and we acclaim your accession to a throne as secure in the heart of the Kingdom.

The institutions and developments of our country are so well known to Your Majesty that we are assured that you will uphold and defend the civil and religious freedom of your subjects, in order to secure to all the 'full exercise of the rights of conscience to protect the liberties and to promote the welfare of all classes of the community.'

We gladly associate Her Majesty Queen Alexandra with Your Majesty in our congratulations, praying Almighty God to shower upon you both the choicest gifts of earth and heaven. May Your Majesty's reign be accompanied by the continued prosperity of all classes of the communities. So far as it is possible may there be peace in your time. May kindred nations and foreign empires look to Your Majesty's throne, with its many countries and dependencies, as the ideal of well ordered rule and constitutional liberty."

Dr. Allen said that the result of Queen Victoria's broadmindedness and love for her people had left us absolutely without controversy as to the form of government under which we should live. In England the late Queen was an Episcopalian, in Scotland a Presbyterian. Though she had limited herself to Established churches for reasons which they could appreciate, she had no prejudice against those churches which were free from State control, and which were organised on principles of freedom and self-government. If Canterbury had been as enlightened and as reasonable as Windsor the relations between Church and Nonconformity to-day would have been a good deal more friendly. There was every reason to believe that King Edward VII. would follow in the footsteps of his distinguished mother. His speeches on his accession to the Throne were models of propriety and good sense, indicating not only that he was going to be a constitutional monarch, but that he was anxious to conserve all that was good in his mother's glorious reign. They were now formally wishing their King Godspeed. Nonconformist loyalty had never been an unreasoning impulse. It was a thoughtful conviction, and it expressed itself, not merely in obedience to the King, but in submission to the constitution of the country, and, he might add, in respect for the will of the people. To "God save the King" they would add "God bless all the people included in our international and Imperial organisation."

Mr. J. COMPTON RICKETT, M.P., seconded the resolution. He remarked that in the vote of congratulation there was a minor key, for they could not yet put aside the sense of sorrow and loss through the death of Queen Victoria. Those who had seen her and had heard her speak would bear testimony to the fact that no portrait of her conveyed the woman. Those quick, searching eyes, the rapidity of apprehension, the impression of intellectual force and ability gave the country confidence, which the history of her reign maintained, that they had one who, if not fully equipped with the highest genius, yet knew the definition of genius, which had been described as the art of taking an infinite amount of pains. Her death deepened the winter of Canada, darkened the summer of Australia, and had hushed in many a home the prattle of the children. One of the memories he should carry with him to his deathbed would be that afternoon in mid-winter, still and quiet as the Resurrection morning, when, from the line of ships, ten miles long, shot out tongues of flames, and out of the grey clouds came a little vessel, and the Queen went across to her sepulchre—no, not to her sepulchre, for while this generation lasted they should take her to their hearts and lives.

The only act of gratitude they could give to her was to transfer to her son and successor some of the loyalty they showed to her. They, as Nonconformists, fully appreciated the value of the Monarchy, and, as Nonconformists, they had done something to lay the foundation of the Throne of the House of Hanover. There was a time in the history of England when the Nonconformists, persecuted, just emerging from prisons, with their eyes not yet accustomed to the law of liberty, but firm in their convictions, held the Monarchy in their hands; and the House of Hanover could never have been reigning to-day had the Nonconformists yielded to the bribe proffered to them by James II. But the bribe carried the forfeiture of the civil rights of citizenship, and they refused it. They stood for the civil rights of citizenship.

They now gave the King a clean sheet of paper. The King was not Prince of Wales. There was no Prince of Wales to-day. You, continued the speaker, have given up the Prince and set your heart on a Red Dragon. They gave to the King their fullest confidence and a free hand, and their acclamation, "God save the King," was also the prayer, "God save the King."

The resolution was unanimously carried, the audience up-standing and joining in the singing of "God save the King."

THE UNION OF THE TWO FREE CHURCHES OF SCOTLAND.

The Rev. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A., D.D., moved the following resolution :—

"While with deep gratitude to the Great King and Head of the Church we rejoice to recall the noble work accomplished for the Kingdom of God in the years that are past by the United Presbyterian Church and by the Free Church of Scotland, we thankfully acknowledge the Hand of God in the great Union which has been so happily consummated between them, and ask the privilege of conveying to the United Free Church of Scotland our most hearty congratulations, and assuring our brethren in the North that we rejoice with them in their joy; that we unite with them in the prayer and in the expectation that the great event will not only be fruitful in blessing to Scotland, but will send out waves of gracious influence to the ends of the earth; and that we hail it as an important step towards the goal, the attainment of which is our highest ambition, the reunion of all the Churches round our Divine Saviour in the common faith and hope and love of His Holy Gospel."

Dr. Rogers said that this question had received far less notice than its significance deserved. His recollection went back to the beginning of the Free Church. The Free Church came like a breath of new life over Nonconformists, both in Scotland and in this country. It was a magnificent spectacle to see the unity between these churches, who now knew no Lord but Christ, and no law but the Gospel of His salvation. Church questions in Scotland were of primary importance, and England and Wales would never rise to their true position until church questions, church principles, and Christian doctrines became a matter of such vital importance to her people as in Scotland. Principal Rainy had lived to witness the grandest triumph that ever fell to religious men in our days. His triumph was due to his Christian unselfishness.

The union of these Scottish churches suggested lessons to them. They did not look for organic union. If they attempted union of that sort they would find the united labours of Hercules mere child's play compared to the labour before them. Now it was natural that two great churches which had really nothing to divide them should unite, but there were still differences that divided the members of that assembly—but not in brotherly love. The late Bishop of London had written him a note which displayed unusual broadmindedness for an Anglican bishop. "I cannot understand," this letter read in effect, "why there should not be a great Christian family in which we should all hold our different opinions, but yet should be in hearty sympathy and love one with another," and this, commented Dr. Rogers, was what the Federation was intended to do. Let them make it manifest that in that united co-operation for the glory of God and the salvation of men, would be laid the foundation of a union which would last as long as eternity and be as wide as the universe.

In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Percy W. Bunting, M.A., the resolution was seconded by Mr. J. BAMFORD SLACK, B.A. (London), who gave a very interesting sketch of the history of the two churches that had united.

Before the resolution was put DR. MONRO GIBSON read the following letter from Principal Rainy:—

"DEAR DR. MONRO GIBSON,

I am very sorry indeed not to be able to go to Cardiff. I would do so with much more pleasure than I would have in any other engagement. But I am fettered by a circle of important engagements here which I cannot throw over and cannot get altered. I can only therefore express my admiration for the remarkable effort with which the Free Churches have cemented their alliance. I feel strongly how important it is for them and for us to be in close touch with one another. And I feel it a great personal loss to be unable to greet the brethren and to receive what I am sure I should find to be their kindly welcome.

You tell me it is part of the programme to pass a resolution congratulating us on our Union here. Let me offer cordial thanks by anticipation. We have the greatest comfort in the Union, and we trust we shall find it to be a channel of much more good than we are yet able to measure.

Yours always truly,
ROBERT RAINY."

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The PRESIDENT read a telegram from the Rev. W. Cuff, President of the Baptist Union, expressing regret at his inability to be present.

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The Rev. A. MACKENNAL, B.A., D.D., moved the following resolution:—

"The National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, while recognising that a grave difference of opinion exists among Christian citizens both as to the origin and as to the conduct of the war in which this country is at present engaged in South Africa, finds in this disagreement no reason why it should not express with one voice its distress that Christian nations could find no way of settling their differences except the cruel arbitrament of the sword; its deepening pain at the continuance of the War and all the horrors attending it; and above all its passionate longing for a peace which, being wise and righteous, shall be enduring.

The National Council calls upon all its Local Councils, and earnestly appeals to all the Free Churches, to beseech Almighty God of His Great Mercy, not only to dispose towards peace the peoples that are at war, but also, delivering their minds and hearts from whatever bias or darkness may have been caused by self-interest or prejudice or passion, to make known to them His will, and to lead both parties to the conflict clearly to see, and humbly to follow, the guidance of God, Who only is wise, to that issue from present difficulties and perplexities which shall best secure the good of all races in South Africa, of the British Empire, and of the world, and so promote the glory of His Own Holy Name."

Dr. Mackennal said that twelve months ago they met under the necessity of silence on this matter, the reason being that if they had discussed it then they would have discussed war, about which they were unhappily divided, but to-day they were met to talk about peace, concerning which there was, he thought, no serious disunion in the Council. Thank God, that which they would not learn by the mere revelation of His will He had compelled them to learn by the rod. The twelve months of suffering to every honest Christian heart since their gathering at Sheffield, had brought them to what he believed would be a unanimous decision. He had looked forward to a reversal of policy and sentiment, but he was one of those who had not dared hope for a reversal of sentiment in so short a time.

Mr. ROBERT WHYTE (London) seconded the resolution. He said it was not a political resolution in any sense at all, but it was a thoroughly Christian one. Its words were sincere, and there was no ambiguity about it at all. They who believed with him that this war was a necessary war nevertheless felt the horrors of it, and prayed continually for its termination, so that whatever divided them on the question it was not the fervent longing for peace. They needed to make sure, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, not that God was on their side but that they were on God's side.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot command you, and do not desire to stop your right to express your opinions, but I do hope earnestly that there will be no continued discussion on this subject. We are not asked to vote upon the speeches, but upon the resolution, upon which I think we are all agreed. May I put the resolution ?

The resolution was carried unanimously.

LORD PEEL'S REPORT.

The Rev. J. TRAVIS (Chester) moved the following resolution:—

> "That this National Council of Evangelical Free Churches rejoices to observe the cordial support given by all sections of the Christian Church and of Temperance Reformers to the Recommendations of Lord Peel's (Minority) Report on the Licensing Laws. It reaffirms its conviction that these Recommendations embodied in Statute Law would tend greatly to diminish the widespread and growing evils of intemperance, and desires all the local Councils to continue their efforts to educate public opinion with a view to the early enactment by Parliament of measures in harmony therewith."

Mr. Travis said he was a prohibitionist, yet he heartily supported the recommendations embodied in Lord Peel's Report, because he believed their adoption would result in a large decrease of national intemperance. Many of the recommendations in Lord Peel's Report would be hailed with great satisfaction by chief constables. The recommendations for the reduction of public-houses was of the first importance. The adoption of the Report would mean a reduction of 60,000 public-houses throughout the country, the proportion being one public-house to every 700 people in the towns and one to every 400 people in the country. Hitherto the weakness of the Temperance party had been divided councils, but all the various sections had accepted the platform of the Minority Report. He had no hesitation in saying that some of the proposals should be obtained in the present Parliament. He referred to the Children's

Bill and Sunday Closing for Monmouthshire. If the Government turned a deaf ear to the united voices of the Churches, they deserved, in Parliamentary language, to be "chucked out."

The Rev. G. S. **HORNBY**, President of the Methodist New Connexion, seconded. The resolution was unanimously carried.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON.

THE FEDERATION REPORT.

THE Council reassembled at 3 o'clock. After devotional service, conducted by the Rev. J. Kirk Maconachie, the President called upon the Rev. Thomas Law, the General Organising Secretary, to submit the Organising Report. Copies had already been distributed to all the representatives, and Mr. Law simply read a few of the more noteworthy passages. He said that no attempt had been made to estimate the results of the mission by arithmetic as that would have been quite impossible. The whole question was far above arithmetic. Before concluding he acknowledged the valuable help he had received from his staff at the Central Offices and the Secretaries throughout the country in the work of the year. The Report is printed in full in this volume, beginning on page 123.

The Rev. **ALFRED ROWLAND**, LL.B., B.A., moved the adoption of the Report. He described it as extremely clear, very concise, and very admirable. The Federation movement had come at the psychological moment. A great influence in the direction of unity had been effected by the practically common hymnology in use in the Free Churches. In his young days, Independents sang only Dr. Watts's hymns and the Methodists only the hymns of Charles Wesley. But now all the churches used hymnals in which were hymns produced by men of the most diverse opinions and convictions. These hymns almost always dwelt upon the essentials of the Christian faith. Hymns had done more for the maintenance of Christian doctrine than all the creeds and trust deeds that had been invented. A great change had come over theological discussion within the last generation. There were no longer fierce disputes between Calvinists and Arminians. Theological discussions were now literary and critical. But these questions did not divide them denominationally at all. He hoped the higher criticism would never become the pabulum of preaching. Speaking of the extension of the noble work of reunion, he pointed to the rural districts, where the population were continually decreasing and the people becoming manifestly poorer. Here was a great field for earnest work, but he would say to those who erected nominally for the glory of God a new place of worship in which a few could meet, that they had no right to do so while there was plenty of room in the little Bethel already there. They should direct their energies in lessening the terrible pauperism which existed in the villages and to the housing problem. Many of their brothers and sisters were almost compelled to go into temptation at present. Mr. Rowland also pleaded earnestly for united temperance work by the Churches.

The **President** explained that Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., was to have seconded the adoption of the report, but had found it impossible through his being quite unavoidably kept in the House of Commons.

The Rev. **Silas K. Hocking** seconded the adoption of the report. He said he had known Mr. Law for many years, and he (Mr. Law) had discovered for himself, and others had discovered for him, qualities which even he himself had no conception of twenty years ago. To him it was a never-ceasing wonder how Mr. Law accomplished all his labours. Mr. Law was a man of one idea, like John Wesley, Luther, Wilberforce, and General Booth. It is such men who make the most impression on the world. It was largely to Mr. Law's organising skill and genius that the movement had been carried to the wonderful proportions it occupied to-day. Mr. Hocking went on to speak of the valuable indirect, as well as direct, results of the Simultaneous Mission. For one thing, it had broken down a great deal of stiffness. There was nothing like a good revival for that. They must recognise the brotherhood of those who believed in Jesus Christ. As Nonconformists they had been getting tremendously respectable, and respectability and stiffness generally went together, but the Federation movement was at enmity with that spirit.

The Rev. **J. H. Harley**, M.A. (London), narrated how the St. Pancras Council had secured the appointment of a Free Church chaplain at the local workhouse. The result of the persistent efforts made by the Council was not only that they had achieved a great victory for themselves, but further the Local Government Board had sent out a circular to all relieving officers stating that inmates of the workhouse must be asked whether they were Nonconformists, and there was more willingness on the part of the poor seeking relief to avow their Nonconformity.

Mr. **David Shepherd** (Cardiff) said the Federation movement had discovered workers of signal ability in various directions. They had found speakers of surprising power, and office-bearers thoroughly qualified for their work like Mr. Law. Mr. Law was the man for the position he occupied—a sanguine man and a man with big ideas. Mr. Shepherd said that the representatives should all read the Report themselves, and get their children to read it. The distribution of Free Church literature was a necessary and very important part of the work of the Free Church Councils. After referring to the big success of the recent ten days' mission conducted by the Rev. John McNeill in Cardiff, Mr. Shepherd said that the Free Churches had awakened the Press through the country to recognition of the work accomplished by the various Councils. In Cardiff they had every reason for thanking the Press for the way in which their meetings were reported.

Gipsy **Smith** described the report as the Acts of the Apostles, for they had in fact and truth been witnessing the times of Pentecost over again. They had been blessed with more than Pentecosts. If he stood there a long time he could not tell them the joy which had been his. They as a Free Church Council had put him in his position, and he thanked them for it. It was the widest field any man could occupy and the most important in this country. Their own act was being daily sealed by the Divine blessing. Mr. Smith went on to narrate some striking incidents of his mission work. He said that he had become convinced that Saturday was the best night for reaching the working men. Hitherto Saturday had been his rest day, but now he was going to rest on Friday, and do all that he could to bring the working classes to Christ on Saturday.

On the conclusion of Mr. Smith's speech the assembly sang the Doxology, and then was led in prayer by the speaker.

Dr. **Monro Gibson**, in the absence of Alderman Evan Spicer, J.P., L.C.C., Chairman of the Finance Committee, submitted the balance-sheet, which, he said, was the most favourable one that had ever been presented.

Alderman **Richard Cory**, in the absence of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., through the illness of Mrs. Perks, seconded the adoption of the balance-sheet.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The **President** announced that the next business was a paper on

FEDERATION ON THE MISSION FIELD.

By the Rev. W. H. Findlay, M.A.

An account of Federation on the mission field might be as brief and as blank as the famous chapter on snakes in Iceland. There is not, as far as I know, anywhere on the mission field, any such federation of churches as this Council represents ; nor am I here to advocate that the time is ripe for extending to the new churches yonder the federating movement which is proving so opportune and so potent for good in the religious life of England. The movement has spread, as you have heard in recent annual Reports, to all parts of the English-speaking world; but among the Christian

Churches of heathendom that stage of growth has scarcely yet been reached, at which what is here meant by federation becomes possible.

The natural history of new-born churches in heathen countries is somewhat as follows. They are at first dependent upon, and therefore more or less subject to, the control of missionary societies in distant lands. When they arrive at self-government they have still slowly to acquire that individuality and self-consciousness which must be attained before they will begin to look round them and be exercised regarding their relations to other churches. When this stage is at length reached—as it is in some parts of the field to-day—the first movement is commonly towards not federation but coalescence, towards the obliteration of what to these new churches, are the artificial sectarian distinctions brought to them by their foreign teachers and founders. This period of coalescence will doubtless be followed, when they grow more at home in the new religion, and all parts of their nature begin to find expression through it, by an era of cleavages, of sect-formation, as the inchoate, characterless Christianity of the earlier stages takes various shape, according to the several tendencies in worship, government, thought, that belong to this new Christendom; and only after this process of cleavage, of which scarcely the first faint symptoms have yet appeared, will come the opportunity for that higher synthesis of federal union towards which the Churches of the older Christendom are so blessedly moving to-day.

But while Federation is at present neither a fact nor a need among the Churches planted in heathen lands, the principles, motives, and aims that underlie the Federation movement at home find such expression among missionaries as may well interest, may perhaps even instruct and stimulate, those who have at heart the true unity of the Churches. If the Churches of the new Christendom are still far in the rear of your march, the missionaries may claim to be well in the van of it; for, as Dr. Fairbairn told you at Sheffield last year, there is among them a oneness in Christ and in Christian service which you at home "take years to follow after and to follow grudgingly."

It is scarcely surprising, perhaps, that the art of co-operation, the discovery and utilisation of union-power, should have been achieved earlier, and should be applied more extensively and variously on the mission field than here at home. We are out of the sectarian hurly-burly there, and confronted instead by systems whose enormity makes all the divisions of Christendom seem petty by contrast. We can sing—

> "Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
> Our comforts and our cares,"

with much more fulness of content and much less mental reservation than you can. Indeed, we often feel as if our only distinction from one another is that we draw our funds from different headquarters, and that we have preferences among the letters of the alphabet—L.M.S., C.M.S., W.M.S., and the like.

Moreover, the appalling inadequacy of our resources to the task before us makes us value, as you in your affluence have not yet been driven to do, all that makes for economy of effort and multiplication of force. Whatever may be the case with you, we cannot afford the luxury of holding aloof from each other. The Home Churches keep us so tight for means that it is only by clubbing our small belongings that we can hope to do anything considerable. In the arctic cold of the long heathen night we have to huddle together for Christian warmth. In our place in the forefront of the battle, in the stern rush and grip of the fight, our companies and regiments get very close to one another, sometimes even get mixed in a way that all the theological text-books of tactics would forbid. You have been finding here in England that nothing has ever brought the Churches so near together, has ever so heartily mingled them in oblivion of strifes and jealousies and historic isolations, as that great campaign against the outer Godlessness on which you have lately combined; do you wonder that in face of the vaster heathenism abroad we tend to a perpetual Simultaneous Mission?

I shall not attempt to survey the extent to which the unifying spirit pervades the world-wide mission field. I will only remind you how it was symbolised in the Conference which gathered, from forty nationalities and from all varieties of Protestant creed and practice, at New York last April. What cause but that of foreign missions could have drawn together so truly ecumenical an assembly, and kept such diverse elements in busy conference for ten days without a ruffle to disturb their perfect harmony? The materials for a world-wide review of co-operative effort are not yet available; but I may briefly illustrate the prevailing spirit and tendency from the field I know best, Southern India.

Here, as everywhere on the mission field, the Bible Society is the great outstanding witness to the need, the possibility, the power of union. The world-wide dearth of the Word of God has drawn men of all the Protestant sects and creeds into a glorious Famine Relief movement for furnishing this bread to the hungry peoples; and as streams of generosity from all the Churches at home flow into that great society's coffers, so the service of missionaries of all churches is used abroad in producing versions of Scripture, and all the missions are distributing agencies. And in the wake of the Bible Society have followed the Religious Tract Society and the Christian Literature Society for India, which have enlisted in their service leading men and women of all the missions and have served the needs of all the churches. The greatest college in India, the Madras Christian College, has shown for many years the splendid effectiveness of inter-mission co-operation; for Free Churchmen and State Churchmen, Scotch and English, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and

Methodist Societies are by formal league combined in the support and government of that great institution.

The trend towards co-operation which these great combined enterprises, and many smaller ones, have for years exhibited and encouraged in South India, and which has also been fostered in local councils and conferences, issued four years ago in the formation of a South Indian Missionary Association, which now embraces more than two-thirds of the whole Protestant missionary force of South India. The objects of this association are parallel to those of your National Council, though its constituency is much wider. The subcommittee which drafted its constitution consisted of an American Congregationalist, an English High Churchman, and an English Methodist. Its membership includes State Churchmen and Free Churchmen, Lutherans of Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and America, Scotch and American Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Plymouth Brethren, all united to practise fraternal intercourse, to take common counsel and to undertake common action. This association arranges conferences, focuses missionary opinion and expresses it, on occasion, to the Government and the public, and seeks to organise and utilise intermission co-operation in every possible way. As specimens of its activity may be mentioned a directory of institutions available for the common service, a board of vernacular examinations for missionaries, and a representative committee which is preparing a common hymnbook for the whole Tamil Church. Missionaries of twenty-four out of the twenty-five Protestant societies at work in South India are found in this association; and it may be doubted whether there has ever before been witnessed the organised association for active service of Christian workers of so many varieties of nationality, thought and ecclesiastical system.

And a year ago the trend towards co-operation found still more advanced expression in a movement which brought the missions themselves into organised relation with each other, as the South Indian Missionary Association had brought the missionaries.

The South Indian Conference, held every twenty-one years for reviewing missionary progress and problems, fell due; and the bold idea was conceived of superseding the old type of Conference—where any attended who pleased, and the assembly was a miscellaneous congeries of units, unable to express itself with authority or even significance—by a Council of delegates representing in due proportion the several missions of South India. Each of the missions—except, alas! that confirmed schismatic, the S.P.G.—elected the number of delegates assigned to it; and so a Council was formed which accurately reflected the judgment and spirit of the whole evangelical missionary body in South India. Proportional representation makes all the difference to the practical effectiveness of an inter-denominational Conference; and we can claim to have achieved that triumph of federal unity among the missions in South

India before you have succeeded in reaching it among the evangelical churches in England. This Conference was able to review with authority the whole field of missionary labour within its area, and, in a series of resolutions drafted for it by committees of experts, to produce a sort of authorised guide to present-day missionary methods in South India. It was able also to urge upon the missions, with all the weight attaching to its representative character, various co-operative measures—for the improvement, for instance, of Scripture teaching in day schools, for the establishment of Christian vernacular journals, of agricultural banks for the depressed classes, etc., etc.—suggestions which for years to come will bear fruit in many directions. Already steps are being taken to commence a strongly-supported Tamil weekly on Christian lines for the Madras Presidency, and already the missions of the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church of America have agreed to unite their theological institutions, to establish a joint normal institution for teachers, and, most signal event of all, to unite their congregations into a single Presbyterian Church of South India.

I am glad to have had this opportunity of calling the attention of the Council to the extent to which the principles which animate it have already found expression on the mission field; and of urging that there ought to be more than a nodding acquaintance between the Federation movement of the Free Churches at home and this great co-operative evangelical campaign abroad. A sympathetic nod is usually given to foreign missions, I believe, at your annual Council, but I do not find that among the varied and multiplied activities which fill your Annual Report, any are related to this great branch of the Church's duty. I know that difficulties surround the question of relating your movement to the foreign missionary enterprise; not the least that your Federation movement is among the Free Churches only, whereas we on the mission field join hands with missions of the State Churches just as heartily as with one another in our assault on free and established heathenism; yet I cannot but feel that your enterprise lacks an element of completeness, misses a source of stimulus and strength, and fails in an opportunity of service, until it is using its growing power to promote the work of God abroad as well as at home. I urge this closer touch with foreign missions for two reasons. First, because, as I have tried to show, it is in setting the battle in array against heathenism, whether the English heathenism outside the pale of the churches, or the greater heathenism outside the pale of Christendom, it is in arraying ourselves against heathenism more than in any other process, that barriers are broken down, and our medley of Churches is marshalled into "one army of the living God." No other branch of Christian duty and service so unites men in a common interest, gathers them so easily on a common platform, is calculated to foster so warmly the federation spirit that you are leagued to promote;

and nowhere will you find more stimulus and suggestion in the development of co-operative effort at home than in the study of what is being done on the mission field.

And let me, in a last word, urge a still weightier reason why this Council should use its great and growing influence in the promotion of foreign missions. The greatest revolution in history is with startling rapidity transforming the world as we knew it, the world of detached nations and peoples each living its separate life, into a single highly articulated organism, with limbs and functions all interdependent. A vertebrate world is the last of the great products of the nineteenth century. Even the man in the street has a world horizon to-day. Even the diplomatist is beginning to suspect that his own nation cannot have security and ease while there are other parts of the world's body politic disordered and corrupt. Even the monthly reviews are beginning to murmur that the abolition of heathenism is perhaps of the greatest European interest, and to wonder whether the Christianisation of China, of Turkey, of Africa, would not do more for the tranquillity of Europe than treaties and armies can do. Signs are multiplying that in many of its aspirations and endeavours Christendom is doomed to mark time till the non-Christian people shall have fallen into line and the whole family of nations can move forward together toward the perfect man. Do not these vast events strike the hour for the Church to make world-evangelisation its great present business? You are essaying to inspire and direct the religious activity of the most vigorous religious life in England; you will lead it terribly astray, you will doom it to miserable futility, if by what is included in or omitted from your programme, by the choice and stress of your activities, you countenance the long-prevailing error that England can be saved in isolation. To hope to save England, apart from the salvation of China and Africa and India, is like hoping to keep the trunk sound while foul disease is in the limbs. Our British Pharmacopœia has drugs grown in every clime; and the medicine that is to cure the complex and widespread evils of modern Christendom waits for ingredients that perchance can only spring in the soil of a Christianised India or Africa. A Christian movement to-day is but a bird of one wing if it does not include the work abroad with the work at home; it is setting itself an impossible task, if it purposes to regenerate England except as part of a greater process that is regenerating mankind. In the name, then, of the perfect humanity, of the full-grown man in Christ Jesus, to the growth of whose full stature all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues have their several contributions to bring, I call upon you to consider the duty of this Council in regard to the evangelisation of the nations that are still without the Gospel of Christ.

Dr. **Mackennal** said that nothing more important than the matter with which Mr. Findlay dealt had been brought before the

Council, and moved that the subject be referred to the Committee for consideration and report.

The Rev. THOMAS LAW seconded.

This was unanimously agreed to.

TUESDAY EVENING SESSION.

AT 7.30 the Council assembled to hear what is known as the Council Sermon. The preliminary devotional services were conducted by the Rev. A. J. Palmer, of Folkestone. A telegram from the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., was read, thanking the Council for its message of sympathy with him in his illness.

DR. PARKER preached the following sermon:—

THE UNLEARNED AND UNBELIEVING.

BY THE REV. DR. PARKER.

IN the Providence of God, I think I never had greater need of your sympathy and co-operation than on this memorable occasion. I ought not to have been here for reasons of health. I have prayed earnestly to God to be my shield and buckler, that the day of distress may not be too much for me. I thank my life-long friend for his very tender and sympathetic prayer. As to my being heard, there will be no difficulty if the man who is sitting next to you will behave himself! I have no fear of you; it is the man who is sitting next to you that may unhappily disturb us! I am stopped already by the telegram which has been read to us from our honoured friend, Mr. Price Hughes. We send to him expressions of affectionate solicitude and of confident hope as to his restoration to health and service and far-spreading influence. I was shocked to hear of the death of Urijah Thomas, whom I have known from his boyhood. He had enough of Welsh perspicacity and penetration when he was fourteen years of age to take an interest in my ministry. I see Urijah at his father's church door, his face a loving smile, his eye a bright hope. He has laboured well. He has done a great day's work in his own way. He was so simple, so young-hearted, so benevolent, making his work his delight. He is to be buried—No! Oh foolish speech! he is to be interred, inearthed to-morrow, but not buried. He will be more alive in a quarter of a century than he has been in any former period of his life and ministry. We send after his memory a message of thanks to God for such a man and such a work. I was told in travelling down here that one of the greatest Wesleyan ministers that ever lived died late last week. I refer to William Arthur, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scripture, a missionary who occupied a unique place, an author whose books bring Pentecostal fire into our studies. But all these afflictions make the world so poor to me! I am a stranger in my own country. My native town is now a cemetery. It is pitiful to go amongst the shadows. They are chilling and utterly discouraging, if there be not behind them another light, greater than the shining of the mid-day, a hope of resurrection, an assurance that in one form or another we shall live. "I am the life." Enough; in that life we live.

There are some persons who would think that they had not had a sermon if there was no text. It will be a long time before we shall get that heresy from some minds. The thing to take is not the text, but the context. Who ever reads the context, which contains the atmosphere, the climate? Who ever gets a full breath of inspiration out of all the circumstances that make the text possible? You shall have a text.

"If there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers."
1 CORINTHIANS xiv. 23.

"If there come in one that believeth not, if there come in one that is unlearned," that would puzzle the National Council of Free Churches. You have never thought of that; you have never passed any resolution upon that. If there come in those that are unbelievers, what would you make of them? You are great at organising, planning, scheming; but if there come in those that are ignorant, what will you do with them? What does "ignorance" mean? It means a layman, a non-professional person, a private individual, not ignorant necessarily in any base sense, but a man who is not in the profession, a man who does not know If there come in those that are unbelievers, what will you do with them? You have your deacons' meetings and your official meetings of divers kinds; but have you ever thought if next Sunday there should come in one that believeth not what you would do with him? Will you sit next to him, next to an infidel, an unbeliever? Would you like to be seen in such association? The Apostle goes out of the plural and goes into the singular: "If there come in one that believeth not." Is the congregation so low in spiritual temperature that the atmosphere would be chilled by one unbeliever coming into it? The Apostle was a great statesman, a wonderful strategist who adopted inclusive and profound and beneficent policies, who set before the people all possible aspects of a case. Now, Corinthians, said he in effect, if there should come in a couple of infidels, and you are howling like so many maniacs, what will the unbelievers think of you?

Have we to consider unbelievers? Certainly! Preachers must always consider the congregation. That is the reason we have failed; we have been preaching to parts of congregations, little knots and cliques of congregations. But the grand redemptive human idea is that we are to preach to man. How difficult it is to realise that we have not to preach to classes, sections, parts or fragments of audiences, but somehow we are by a divine leading of the fingers to get hold of the chord that everybody recognises, and returning home, shall say, "It was like the sound of a great Amen." We want the human touch, the universal sentiment, "the one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin." If two or three people come in who are non-professional, what in the world will you do with them? The Apostle is saying to us in modern English, "Remember that the congregation is not made up of insiders." You heard that tap at the door just now? That tap is always sounding there, whether we hear it or not. The mere hearing is a vulgarity. The world is surging round the sanctuary, the altar, and beating with its knuckles upon the panel of the door. How difficult it is to get some people to believe that there is space, room, outside your church! It is very difficult if you meet a man going to another church to think that he is really going to the true church. You would not say so, but the things unsaid are the tragedy of the world. Really and truly, there are places and spaces much bigger than the Park Hall or that great building I preached in when I was last in Cardiff. And if you limit your purview and sympathy to the few people that gather around your altar, you will be small folks and very poor and pitiable people. You know I've had a long experience of life, and I have met some really honest and honourable infidels. You don't smile at that. You hail it with a meaning cough. You are not to consider a congregation as made up of one, two, and three. Well, when we were very young (how long is that ago?) we used to write our sermons word for word, principally with a view of there being present the man who took in, if he did not read, a quarterly review. They were poor sermons. We should have preached to the man, the soul, the want, the sin, the despair of the world. If we so take matters, then one hearer in the congregation will be enough for any preacher.

It takes a great preacher to preach to one soul. There was only one preacher who ever did it with adequate effect, and that was Jesus Christ. He preached his most wonderful sermons to single people. It is a marvellous thing. "And they marvelled that He spake with the woman." They would not have marvelled if she had been on the fringe of the audience and had heard this word: "I that speak unto thee am He." A congregation could not have understood that which was said to one panting, pining, weeping heart who could in a measure take it in. Always through the solitary individual He spoke to humanity. It wasn't a solitary instance as we count solitary. It was a typical, symbolic, ideal instance. That woman stood for the sinning women of her race. And once He said to another woman, "Thy brother shall live again." "I know that he shall live again at the last day; I know that; but I want something dearer, closer, warmer. I know that he shall rise at the Resurrection." And Jesus answered, "I am the Resurrection." That would have been lost on a crowd, until the crowd was condensed and typified in a single heart-breaking, despairing woman. I should like some of you to feel as you look at her that the world is larger than your chapel. I know you admit it in theory. I don't want that. I want your hearts to say so. It always does good in any church, and it would do good in this hall, to break some of the windows. That is what the Church is dying for—want of ventilation, fresh air, connection with the infinite atmosphere. Perhaps this National Council may do something—and is doing, I believe, a good deal—towards the enlarging of man's thought, aspiration, and sympathies.

Consider the layman, the non-professional man. I am very much interested in him. He is a delightful person to talk to. He knows no technical words. He is not lost in what is called terminology. I don't know that he has any professional and technical knowledge of the fourth century. How some people are engrossed by the fourth century! What a pity it ever occurred! Some people would never be at all happy, and they would not have a holiday of an intellectual sort, if they didn't water the weeds of the fourth century, and make a livelihood out of its putrid heresies. What we want to-day is to recognise the living anguish of humanity. We want to address ourselves to the stress and worry and agony and to the bleeding wounds of this day's misery. Of course, I would appoint a certain number to look after the fourth century. Committees ought to be appointed for such purposes. I am not a friend of committees myself, and I will appoint others to serve on them. It is right to have experts and specialists. We have such experts and specialists for the body, why not for the soul?

I wonder if I could get anyone to believe that the ministry is not one of the learned professions! That would be a great stride in progress. One of the learned professions! Ah, me! Leave that to those who deal with the finite, the transient, the concrete, the visible. I know that the great Henry Rogers (I have met him on a committee of the Lancashire College) always objected to the expression "a learned ministry." Said he, "Say an instructed ministry." He could afford to say that, because he was a learned man. It takes a man of some stature to stoop. The mischief is that, if I say you should take notice of the unbeliever, some of those young men who have invited me to go to the colleges and speak to them on preaching, and some other young men, should so misunderstand me as to pay attention to nobody else but the unbeliever, and treat the congregation as if it were a gang of infidels. That is the danger. Never address yourselves to the absentees. If you address the natural unbelief of the heart, if you address human experience, you'll be a good preacher, and you'll be a member of the "learned profession" if you study in the school of Christ. Many a learned man is not an educated man. People make great mistakes about that matter. They mistake information for education, for spiritual instruction, an uplifting of the Holy Ghost. There are many learnings. The book is not the measure of learning. You may be learned by deep, tender and large experience of human nature in all its sin and sorrows.

Now, if there should come into the assembly an unbeliever, I will hear what the man has to say about you. "You were at church this morning?" "Yes." "Well, what did you think of it?" "Nothing." "How is that?" "Well, they seemed to me to be pulling the Bible to pieces in the morning, to preach out of it in the evening. They may be right or they may be wrong, but I think they ought to have solid agreement somewhere about their own Book. I left the place, saying, 'There is no rest for me here.' I don't pass any judgment on the good man. He preached intensely, but he didn't preach to me. He reasoned, after a fashion, without reason. Sometimes he was neither above reason nor under reason. He was out of reason. He had nothing to do with it. He was a Colonial, he had no place yet in the Imperial geography." Now, don't imagine, my dear young friends, that the people who are in the front galleries are persons who are really distracted because they cannot make up what they call their minds. I purposely put it in this grotesque way. I believe the people want the Bread of Life, something to live on. The soul cannot live on mere verbal criticism. Oh! find me grace in God's book, give me bread that the soul can appreciate. "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

The unlearned man has been to church. "I say, what did *you* think of the Church this morning?" "I could not make anything of it; the place seemed to be filled with pictures, and crosses, and crucifixes, and altars, and there was one man who got up in the middle of the whole thing and began to light candles. It was a summer day; the Lord had done His best for the green earth, but this man, who was rather short of stature, was climbing up a ladder with his torch in his hand to light a candle." "Well, do you think that was wrong?" "I say nothing about it being right or wrong, but it looked to me to be something I could not understand, and I go to church to be edified, not to be bewildered." Bewilderment is often the beginning of a good livelihood. There is a salary in bewilderment if you handle it properly; there are people everywhere out of Wales who like to be "learnedly bewildered." They say the sermon this morning took us into the third heaven. I say I don't want to be there. "What was the text?" "The text?—I have forgotten for the moment." "What was the subject?" "I—I—hardly know how to put it into words." "What was the point of it?" "I—well, I don't know, but I enjoyed it, and I was in the third heaven," and some of the congregation paid up the arrears of pew rents because they had been in the third heaven. A man welcomed me to this town by saying, "Now, let us have long hymns, and the choir will take the roof off." I said I didn't want the roof off. They may take it off after I have got into the Park Hotel. There is no particular virtue in taking the roof off.

If the unlearned, the unbelieving, man comes in, the Apostle said, he comes to one of two conclusions. If some of these unbelieving people hear you talking in tongues, words unknown, with nobody present to interpret, the unbeliever will go away and say, "These people are mad." What is the other result? Possibly this. If he understand, if he get into the mystery of this grace, if he is fed by this food, he will say, "God is with you of a truth." That is how the public comment on sermons; and the public will comment on sermons whatever we may say to the contrary. "They are mad." Why does he say that? Because he is making nothing of it. It spake not to his heart. He is outside the whole thing. The Apostle says, "You can have a tongue if you can get one to interpret; but a tongue is a private gift and expresses a private ministry in which you and God can talk together. But if you are considering the congregation, if you are dealing with a promiscuous public, then have a common language which people can in some degree understand." Still, the Master knows how to lift the commonplaces into the sublime, and men, without knowing any thing about technicalities, rhetoric or eloquence, will feel that there is a gracious ministry about the instruction and sympathy. They can understand these. I have been a minister in an agricultural district, in a great manufacturing centre, and close upon thirty-two years in the Metropolis of the world. Therefore, I am entitled to bear testimony. Understand this: many a man who cannot follow your words can follow your sympathy and your meaning. There is a subtle way of approaching to the highest meanings of things; but oh! if it is to be a ladder-way, see that the foot of the ladder rests on the earth, then the head may be lost in the gleaming mornings beyond the blue. But let the foot of the ladder be visible on the earth, and there will be a practical available effect; and then let there come the kind of mystery and sublimity that grows out of common sense, obvious history and personal experience.

Well, now, in your church you say you have no infidels and laymen—ignorant persons. Well, now, I will modernise the instances for you. If there come in a broken-hearted man, is there anything in the sermon for the broken-hearted? I felt myself this morning, whilst under the spell of the simple and telling eloquence of my friend the preacher (Rev. C. H. Kelly), that there was something for everybody. It was a great human speech to a great human necessity. Now I will tell you this: there are always broken hearts in every congregation, broken hearts sometimes palpitating under smiling faces. You can't always tell that a man is in high spirits; he may be putting it on, putting it all on, so that by a gracious hypocrisy he may shut out the curious criticism of an unsympathetic public. But he is in the congregation. He may be a professor of some learned subject, but his heart is torn. He may be a great journalist, or literary man; yea, he may be a great creator of laughter for other people. He may make his living by making laughter, but his heart is broken. Said the comedian to a great doctor, "Give me something for depression of spirits." "You don't want medicine, go and hear Grimaldi; he will laugh the blues out of you." "Alas, sir," was the answer, "I am Grimaldi!" Have you ever spoken to the broken hearts? Then you are the preacher I want to hear. My heart is broken, it is a sepulchre. I have only heard of the Resurrection, and I can't clearly realise it. If the preacher begin to talk to me about what Christ did and what Christ can do, and if he shall rise from tone to tone, with a heightening eloquence, until he can say "Death is abolished," I look up. That is the man I have been wanting to meet and hear, and he says, "You can be so filled with the grace of Christ and the power of the Spirit, that you can cry 'Oh! Death, where is thy sting! Oh! Grave, where is thy victory.'" That is the man I want to hear sometimes. I could easily go to the cemetery, but I could not come back again. It would be a going with no return. When these great loving preachers, and preachers of the Great Love, speak these things they keep society alive; they keep the heart young; and sometimes we can be surprised out of our sorrows into the new song to which the opening prayer made delightful mention.

If there shall come into the assembly an inquirer, a man who says, "What must I do to be saved?" well, as Mr. Kelly said, will you tell him the plan of salvation, the great idea of redemption, the idea with blood at the centre—not vulgar blood of vulgar minds, but that red crimson poesy and actuality which typifies the broken heart of the Son of God? Have you ever spoken to the inquirer? Have you any sermons addressed to the inquirer and the unconverted? Short, simple, telling, experiential sermons, that is to say—sermons filled with your own experience, for experience can accumulate itself into an argument.

I will give the preachers another couple of "ifs," and then, I think, I shall let them go—after the collection has been made. A man said to me on Monday that he had heard my sermon in the City Temple last Sunday night through the electrophone. Do they ever make a collection through the electrophone? Science is not an unmitigated advantage. James took up this matter of the "ifs." "If there come an unlearned one, an unbeliever," James says, "if there come in a man in gay clothing"—the clothing is the most conspicuous thing about the man until you know him better; and again James says, "If there come in a man clothed in vile raiment"—I think that is almost impossible—yes, my faith begins to stagger; there I stand at the vestry window to watch the people passing. There is the man well-to-do, he is coming in? Yes. There's a man with a poor miserable coat on, and that which is most detestable to some people on a Sunday, a pipe in his mouth. I say he is not coming? No, he passes on. Near me there is a great lodging house for tramps, and they are turned out on Sundays, as on other days, about the time of church-going. There is one with bent back, poorly clad, with the marks of the plough of sorrow on his face, will he come in? No. We say, send this man to the City Missionary. What wonderful people we are. To think of going into a church with one of those! It would disperse the congregation. But some congregations would be the better for being dispersed. I want to see a great preacher who will empty the churches. I read in Wesley's Journal, and I revel in it, this: "Visited So-and-so, and expelled twenty-nine persons. Glory be to God!" He was a great man. But dare any of us expel anybody? You say, I am not so afraid of expelling the man as of the complaint of the weak-kneed man in the same pew who says, "What a pity to get rid of dear Mr. So-and-so! He is such an amiable man. I am very sorry you have spoken severely to him." I should like to expel them both. Do let us get the reality. Let us get through the rotten wood to the core of the oak, if we can. Sometimes loss is gain. If we could get rid of some people you would improve the quality of the rest.

Brethren, I have struggled through this discourse; my head has been aflame with pain. Yet on the whole I am glad I came here, and that I have delivered this testimony. You will pardon the shortcomings of a disabled man. I want us all to so act in our work as to impress the unbeliever, the ignorant man, that they shall both go away saying, "Whatever these people may be there is no doubt about one thing, they are in dead earnest. They may be right or they may be wrong, but they are burning with a single love, and their eyes are alight with the morning. Every utterance is the music of earnestness. They may be mad, but it is with enthusiasm. They believe it." Oh! send me such reports from the churches, and I will say, "The morning draweth nigh and the shining of the sun increaseth."

WEDNESDAY.

MORNING SESSION.

THE Council reassembled at 9 o'clock. After devotional exercises, conducted by the Rev. W. LANSDELL, B.A., A.T.S., a sermon was preached by the Rev. J. MORGAN GIBBON.

INDIVIDUALITY AND UNION.

BY REV. J. MORGAN GIBBON.

> "Now the God of all patience, and consolation, grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
>
> ROMANS xv. 5, 6.

The return of spring once more forces attention not only to the delightful variety of Nature, but also to the perplexing diversity of type, opinion, method of work which obtains in Christ's earthly kingdom.

Early as the snowdrops, regularly as the crocus, the prospectuses of annual assemblies make their appearance. Every year the list is longer. May is not sufficient for meetings. April and a part of March, together with the opening days of June, have been appropriated already, and it would seem that ere long the whole summer will be requisitioned.

Now there are many who, looking at this spectacle of religious activity, are puzzled whether to name it Pentecost or Babel—the gift or the confusion of tongues.

In Paradise Dante beheld the countless multitude of saints united "in fashion like a snow-white rose"—a rose of souls.

But here is a forest of agencies, a mob of denominations, a tangle of creeds, we are told. Ought not all Christians to join hands to clear away these wild woodland growths, and sét themselves forthwith to grow the Rose of Souls on earth?

"Where is the simplicity that is towards Christ," we are asked, "and that unity in whose strength Christians can alone hope to overcome the world?"

Well, but simplicity itself is no such simple matter. There are varieties. There is a simplicity of poverty and another of wealth. Ignorance has one sort. Wisdom a very different kind. Jubal's harp was a simple affair; but a great organ, which is harp and pipe, drum and trumpet, in one, is also simple in its way. Lamech's war-song had no doubt a simple catching air, which sung itself into the brains of delighted antediluvians, but the "Messiah," with its multitudinous harmonies rising and falling like the waves of a sea, yet lit up and dominated by one idea, has its own sublime simplicity.

Now which of these simplicities should we aim at? The bare simplicity that offers itself at the outset, or the rich hard-won simplicity which hides at the far end of long processes and arduous labour?

Shall our theology be a cuckoo song, or shall it be like the choral harmonies of the Apocalypse, the voice of many waters, the voice of a great thunder of harpers harping with their harps? Would we have our Christianity be a brook or a sea?

These questions are as old as Christianity itself. This diversity of which men complain is not a modern innovation. It was contemporary with St. Paul.

It is abundantly evident, also, that the questions which then divided men were every whit as grotesque and trivial as any that trouble the Church to-day.

Diet and days are the illustrations St. Paul gives—very trivial they appear to us—but ah! the greatness of trifles. Never sneer at trifles. Little things rule the world. Men die with more dignity than they bear toothache. Great are trifles!

Hence St. Paul, knowing well how utterly unknowable one man is to another, and how little power men have over their own opinion, makes no attempt to set either party right. Of course he had his views, and he takes no great pains to conceal them. But he does not press them, nor make the slightest effort to reduce the number of private beliefs at Rome. But leaving all these opinions exactly as they were—nay, rather passionately defending their right to exist, championing the cause of individual liberty—he presses upon them the duty of that higher unanimity which is not only possible amid diversity of belief, but is in fact richer, stronger, far more arresting and impressive, by reason of the variety out of which it rises and over which it rules.

The value of unity depends on the nature of its constituents. Twenty is more than ten, but twenty pence is less than ten shillings, and a thousand shillings are not equal to a hundred pounds, and one volunteer is worth many pressed men.

Well, the clergy-Churches have made unity, or rather uniformity, an end of itself, and for its sake they have sacrificed the individual, and stopped the clock of the world, with the result that while Rome, for instance, is a stupendous masterpiece of ecclesiastical statecraft, yet, because the terms of union amount to a moral and intellectual tyranny, the value of the union of all those millions of disfranchised minds and consciences is small, compared with far lesser unions in which men are free to think and work.

But if the clergy-Churches have idolised unity, the democratic

Churches have too often forgotten that compactness is a power, and in the interests of liberty they have neglected union to their great loss.

But St. Paul shows us a more excellent way than either. We are not put to the alternative of a choice between freedom and concerted action. A union of slaves is a weak thing.

Isolated individualism is incomplete and ineffective, but where the rights of the individual are safeguarded, and union is based on love, then the freedom of the individual gives value and virtue to the union, while the union completes and renders effective each individual composing it.

In this way may the Rose of Souls be grown on earth as it is in heaven.

I.—The Rights of a Man in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul's client is a man who is weak in faith, not weak, mind you, as to his faith in Jesus Christ, but limp in his grasp of Christian truth, unenlightened, scrupulous, crotchety. In the person of this somewhat troublesome type, the Apostle defends the rights of every man in Christ. He asks us to look at the matter from four separate angles of vision. He begins by setting before us a great household. Houses differ much. In some, the service required is of the barest possible kind. In others, a great variety of service is needed. Such is the house St. Paul asks us to think of—a great royal household, in which, by reason of the number and variety of its relations to the world, the service is of necessity large and varied. And this house is the house of Christ on earth, a house in which the primitive simplicity of the cottage had become impossible in the Apostle's day, whose simplicity even then could only be that of a royal palace, in which all the wheels of service obeyed the same motive power, and subserved the same master will.

True in his day, it is still more true in ours. It is not one type of man, nor one sort of service, that can meet the needs that pour in through the open doorways of the House of Jesus. Men of all kinds, all classes, all shades of thought, styles of character: the wise and the foolish, rich and poor; the young who know no sorrow, the old who have forgotten the taste of joy; the pure that walk in white, the fallen bemired with guilt; men by nature credulous, ready to believe all things, others by nature sceptical, loth to believe anything—lo, all these wait upon our Christ, that He may give them their meat in due season.

His Gospel was to be presented to the thoughtful and the cultured, but some day, you pick up a volume of University Sermons, say, and because you miss your own theological catch-words on every page, you close the book with a sneer. "H'm'. Dry stuff, no Gospel, no Holy Ghost." Who are you? Who gave you the right to judge another man's servant? How do you know the effect this restrained under-statement, suggesting rather than asserting, may have on a type of mind which your fuller and warmer steaming words would repel? Refute whatever errors you find, but whatever concerns souls should be serious in your eyes, even error itself, and your only weapons should be those of justice and love. But the Gospel has to be preached to all classes, to men of no thought, no knowledge of books, no refinement of taste, speaking a coarse unlovely dialect of the King's English. Well, there is a warm welcome for such in the House of Jesus, and here is a man who can preach in their tongue. He puts the Gospel facts and truths in startling figures of speech. He speaks much of blood and very often of fire, and you sneer at him. You label him narrow, coarse, what not? Well, but if men's lives have been transfigured on that mountain; if from this earthen vessel, sin-parched lips have drunk the living water; if wives tell of husbands, once drunken brutes, now sober kindly men; if little children can tell of homes once squalid hells, now nests of happy love—who are *you* to find fault? May not the Master of the heart serve His guests in the way He and they choose?

"Granted," you say, "but see, here is a man who is not sound. His message is defective." Yes, there are such, and what is more, there is room for such in so great a house. Even James, the Lord's brother, seems lacking in many of the doctrines of Paul—so far, at least, as his Epistle goes, which Luther therefore called a "right strawy epistle," ignoring the fact that some who have no appetite for Paul's strong meat can eat at James' modest table.

Men must be judged by their place and function in the development of thought. Some are able by means of just one gracious truth, which they hold with deep conviction, to minister to men, to whom a fuller creed is as yet a difficulty, and it would seem that as the manna had the taste of all things in it, every Christian truth fully held has something of the value of all other Christian truths within itself.

You are in good health, this man is in the early stages of convalescence. The dinner bell rings, and you say, "Come along with me, let's have a good hearty meal together." Friend, do you go, enjoy your full bill of fare, and may digestion wait on appetite. But for this man, as yet it is a choice between meagre fare or nothing. Perhaps he will join your table later on, perhaps he will not, but the Master who said one dish is enough will not let him starve. There is a table set for him, there are servants to look after him, to give him the plain bit of bread he can eat, and the cup of cold water he can drink in the Master's name, and if he is fed and thankful who are *you* to criticise? You say, "Unless this and unless that, the Master will cast him forth." The Master wants his house filled. He has set open a door which no man can shut. None of us who are in Christ Jesus liveth to himself. Whatever our peculiarities or deficiencies, we are the Lord's; He has accepted, and he needs us all, and as His domestics we are free of His house. In fact the uniformity of creed and service on which many Popes, both Roman and British, set their hearts, is as undesirable as it is impossible.

II.

But now instead of the House of Jesus on earth, see the Great White Throne of God appears in heaven.

We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, for it is written "As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall make confession to God."

Oh, glorious oath of God, confirming for ever the rights of the soul and the dignity of man in Christ, an oath full of promise, full of holy joy, if also full of terror for the sinful. It has its dark side, I know, but oh, the brightness of its other side.

Job, when too much judging and too many judges had well driven him mad, cried, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him: that I might come even to His seat. I would order my cause before Him. Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power? Nay; . . . but He would give heed unto me, if only I could find Him."

Well, every soul shall find Him. Each one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Each one shall bend before Him, and He shall bend His ear to catch the confession whispered, stammered or sobbed out at His feet. Ah, let us not judge one another any more. This knowledge is too high for us. We have no jurisdiction over souls in Christ. Leave our judgment in the hands of God.

III.

But change your point of view once more. The Apostle bids us look at things in the light of the Atonement. He shews us the Cross on which Christ died, and at the foot of the Cross a man, just one solitary man. We recognise him at a glance. He belongs to another denomination. He is a weak, heterodox, crotchety creature. We have argued with him. We know he is wrong on several points and should like to have another turn at him. What brings him to this holy place? Why stands he in front of the Cross? Listen. He is the man for whom Christ died. He is as sacred as though he were the only one. Doubtless he is wrong, and you are right, on the matters that divide you. Nevertheless, destroy him not—hurt not, endanger not his spiritual life, such as it is; remember who he is, him for whom Christ died. Will you not also die a little if need be, in order to complete his salvation? For finally, could you look into his soul you would see God at work there building up. The man is crude in experience, defective in belief, imperfect in all respects, but have patience. God is busy with him.

No doubt you are quite right in the view you take of "meats." Or is it on "days" you are strong? Well, whatever it is, "higher criticism," "eternal torment," "literal inspiration," "the deluge," "the Book of Jonah," "Cain's wife" and "the little horn," your theory no doubt is highly reasonable and your arguments incontrovertible. Hold fast your views. Enjoy them. It is a great thing to be sure. Only remember that the Kingdom of God, the religion of salvation, is not any one of them, nor all of them together. And do not for their sake overthrow the work of God in a single human soul. It is so easy to overthrow, remember, and it is so hard even for God to build up.

Who would interrupt a poet at the moment when the Muse overshadowed him with her purple wings? Who would break in on the artist at the critical point in the making of a great picture; or distract a musician in the act of capturing and fixing down for ever the melodies of some immortal song? Who would not rather stand sentinel before the studio and say to every thoughtless intruder, "Hush! he is at work." Well, there is a Maker whose poem is man's soul, an Artist whose renewing hand fills earth with countless things of beauty, and covers the blue fields of heaven, but whose masterpiece is yet to come, a world redeemed from sin, One who even now is weaving the melodies of a sweeter song than ever the morning stars sang together. The Father worketh hitherto. Let be your little questions awhile, let the pother of diet and days stand over. Be still and know that He is God, and that all souls are His and His alone. But is Christianity then to be sheer individualism? Oh, no; Christianity is union—the union of free souls in Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ. The end of Christian liberty is Christian brotherhood. Freedom gives character and value to union, and union gives completeness and effectiveness to character. Iron sharpeneth iron, diamond is polished in diamond dust, but man's whetstone is man; isolation is death; fulness of life is in union with others, and power over men. Hence St. Paul's passionate championship of individual rights leads up not to the conclusion "Let every one do as he likes," but rather to the example of Jesus Christ, who pleased not Himself, but accommodated Himself to the ignorance and weakness of men, that He might win their hearts to love God and do His will.

The aim of Christianity is to keep Jesus Christ in the world, and so, having brought his readers to the feet of Christ, the Apostle kneels there in prayer. "Now the God of patience." Ah! it needs long patience, this work. The God of patience and of comfort grant you to have the same mind, one with another, according to the will of Christ Jesus, that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So he prayed, kneeling in spirit at Jesus' feet. Two thousand years almost have passed since that great prayer began to climb its way to Heaven, and it has been followed by similar petitions without number. The mystic ladder is crowded with angels ascending with prayer for "peace on earth, goodwill to man." From the earliest times, men hoped that the Church of Peter would give way to the Church of Paul, and even that pass into the Church of John, the Church of Love. And so, age after age, the angels have ascended, bearing in their hands the prayers of the saints for union among God's people. But when shall we see the angels descending with God's answer of peace?

Well, the descending angels have been seen—nay, is not one on the ladder at this moment, and very near to ourselves? What is this same union of Free Churches, imperfect as it is, but a visible proof that the God who gave his people patience to work for it, has now given them this for their consolation amid many discouragements? "He does nothing," cried Carlyle, in one of his despairing moods, but He has done this in our day. After the barren winter of disputation and isolation, the spring has come to the Free Churches, and without abandoning any single denominational tenet the path to the higher unity has been found. Not a single thorn-bush has He cut down, but a lily has grown up among them. But we value March flowers neither for their smell nor their colour, but their promise. Every snowdrop is a prophet and hath a prophet's reward. The daffodils are heralds from a far country; they bring us tidings of summer, whose colour they wear. Well, our little union is a March flower. God made it; and even Solomon, in all his glory as a temple-builder, was not arrayed like this. We cherish it for its own sake, and also for what is to follow. Queen Victoria said once to a clergyman, "I hope you get along well with the Nonconformists in your parish: you'll have to in heaven, you know." Well, I believe we shall have to on earth some day, that all God's people will be made willing in the day of His power, and all His will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. God has shown us a way out of division into unity without injury to individual and denominational convictions, and the path once found shall not be lost or closed again. We shall be followed, aye, and surpassed. The voice of one that cried came to our fathers saying, "In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

The Churches shall again find their way to the upper chamber, and in a baptism of fire and spirit the Churches shall become a church —a church of all the Churches. The Roman shall be there with all its genius for organisation preserved, but with all its corruptions and its cruelties burnt out of it by God's cleansing fire. The Anglican, too, with all its reverence and love of culture, but with none of its arrogance and love of rule. Methodism shall be there with the fire burning clear and all its smoke gone; the Baptists shall be there with all their zeal and splendid courage, but with not a trace of—h'm; Presbyterianism, with its order and dignity and learning, but not a single vestige of the h'm; the Quakers, with all their spirituality and love of peace, but without any ostentation of their eccentricity; the Salvation Army, with its passion for souls undiminished, but with its noise of drums and tabors a little abated. Independency shall be there, with its love of liberty stronger than ever, because its coldness and love of isolation shall melt like snow in the breath of the Lord. And others, yea, all God's people now distributed over many sects and denominations, shall, without loss of freedom or surrender of conviction, come together in one glorious church of Churches, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. The God of patience and comfort will do this great thing. The angel of the new annunciation shall make his appearance. God will overshadow His people as in Bethlehem, and there shall be born a new body for the Spirit of Jesus, in which He shall visibly dwell, and repeat, nay, excel the miracles of the first Incarnation; yea, greater things than these shall He do. He shall cast forth the demons that haunt our civilisation. He shall heal the leprosy of lust. He shall silence the angry winds of war, and still the waves of troubled nations. He shall open the eyes of a blind science, that it may see God, and unstop the ears of a deaf indifference, and loosen the palsy of helpless unbelief. He shall be as a refiner's fire. He shall purify the sons of Levi and lead the tribes forth, conquering and to conquer, and through his Church of Churches bring in the kingdom of the Father, that God may be all and in all.

Three papers on "Our Sunday Schools" were the next items on the programme. The PRESIDENT first called upon Dr. MONRO GIBSON.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, M.A., D.D.

The Old Testament must always have a most important place in the Sunday School, not only as an integral part of Holy Scripture, but because it shows us the Divine curriculum in sacred knowledge for the race in its childhood and youth, and therefore cannot but be specially suitable for the instruction of the childhood and youth of each successive generation.

It cannot be denied, however, that, within recent years, difficulties have arisen on account of the change of view brought about in the minds of many Christians by the results, or the supposed results, of recent investigations. It has, unfortunately, happened that many who have devoted themselves to these lines of research have been deeply prejudiced, having entered on their investigation with theories of their own to maintain. Not a few have been in bondage to the prevailing prejudice of the time against all that is spiritual and divine, and have accordingly endeavoured so to use the new material as to sow the seeds of unbelief. Their constant endeavour is to resolve the divine element in the history into the human, and the spiritual into the natural, their object being to eliminate all that cannot be explained by processes of natural evolution; and thus they have given only too good occasion to those who wish to set aside the divine authority of the Word. The result of this has been that all these new inquiries have been regarded with apprehension, and even with horror, by many excellent people who think that they threaten the very foundation of the faith. On the other hand, there are those who, while rejecting the conclusions of the unbelieving critics, and deploring the effect of their assaults upon the faith, recognise that these are to be met, not by denouncing all investigation, as if the Bible could not hold its ground in face of the freest and fullest research, but by following carefully the work of those reverent and believing scholars who are tracing out the same lines of inquiry in sympathy with, and not in antipathy to, the spiritual and divine. They recognise as legitimate and necessary the criticism of which the Apostle speaks when he says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things," where the word "judgeth" is the identical word from which our "critic" comes. The unspiritual man is thoroughly incompetent to judge of the spiritual things of the Bible, just as the unmusical man would be no critic of music, and the prosaic man no judge of poetry. But where the spiritual things of the Bible are "spiritually judged" (R.V.)—it is the same word again—where the spiritual things of the Bible are subjected to criticism by spiritually minded men there need be no fear of the result. And accordingly there are those among our Sunday school teachers who have welcomed many of the conclusions of these believing critics, not only because they seem to shed new light on the old theme, but because, in their view, the divine authority of the Scriptures is not only not relaxed thereby, but is set in a fuller, clearer, richer light than ever. In these circumstances, we are confronted with the difficult and delicate question as to what is to be the attitude of our Sunday schools towards this burning question of the day.

Let it be laid down as an axiom to start with, that only those who firmly believe in the divine authority of both Old and New Testaments have the right to be Sunday school teachers at all. A man who has no message of God to declare, but only doubts of his own to ventilate, is quite out of place in the pulpit of a preacher or in the chair of a teacher. Those who are themselves wandering in mist and darkness are no proper guides for others, least of all for the children. Most intelligent people indeed have doubts and difficulties in minor matters—so we cannot expect our teachers to be all-round dogmatists, though even in the minor matters they should be careful not to parade their doubts; but if their doubts touch the great question whether God has really spoken to man and given Himself for our salvation, then must the doubter be silent, or if he must speak, let it be under the banner of infidelity, not under the flag of Christ.

Unbelievers being ruled out, the question is between those who accept the divine authority of the Scriptures on the old lines alone, and those who think they fortify themselves in the same position by accepting some of the new views which they believe to have been satisfactorily proved. And the main question is not as to the holding of the new views, but as to the use of them in teaching. How far is a teacher justified in bringing before his class what he considers to be the result of modern investigation?

Here again we must start with the axiom that the teacher must be honest. If a teacher believes that the Pentateuch is a composite production, he must not teach his scholars that Moses wrote it all as his own original composition. I take this as a simple illustration, which is none the worse that it suggests the remark that a good Sunday School teacher is likely to find something very much better to do than to occupy his time with a matter which is of no spiritual value, when there are so many urgent themes pressing for attention. Still, if such a question is forced on his attention, he must be quite frank and perfectly honest. A man must either teach what he believes or not teach at all. Are we then to have two sets of teachers in the same school, contradicting each other along the whole line of critical inquiry, the one strenuously maintaining the old orthodoxy, the other as strenuously insisting on the new orthodoxy, and each denouncing the position of the other? That, of course, would never do. What then?

My opinion is, that if there only be in all our teachers the true spirit of their work, the abiding desire for the highest welfare of those entrusted to their charge, there need be no difficulty. In the first place there is the thought already suggested that in the great majority of the lessons in Old Testament as well as New there need be no occasion whatever for raising any of these questions. It was the Scriptures of the Old Testament of which the Apostle said that they are "profitable for doctrine, and for reproof, and for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." If these eminently practical aims are what we are intent on, we shall not have time for critical questions. It is the kernel of truth which it is our business to provide. As a matter of research it may be of interest to examine the shell, ascertain its structure, and exercise our minds as to its production and development; but with a teacher of any competence the half-hour at his disposal will be short enough to extract, divide and distribute that which is good to eat. The rind of an orange has its beauty and its use, and there is much to be learnt by investigating it; but if time is limited you are better employed in squeezing out the juice. The letter of Scripture is the rind, the spirit is the juice; the one is the shell, the other the kernel. One of the greatest dangers of our time is making far too much of the letter of Scripture, and far too little of the spirit, in forgetfulness of the emphatic warning of Scripture itself: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." And most certainly it will kill our Sunday school work, if we take up the time of our scholars unnecessarily by airing our views on the letter of Scripture, instead of bending our energies humbly and reverently to discover what Divine message comes through the vehicle, however imperfect, of the letter.

But while these principles will apply in nineteen cases out of twenty, what about the twentieth when the question does come up? Or what of those cases where a difficult question is sprung upon us? In that case I should consider it to be the teacher's duty to state what he considers to be the truth on the matter, but at the same time to intimate that this is a subject on which good Christians differ, and therefore that it is a matter which is not essential; on which a person may think either this way or that, without serious harm. It should in fact be treated as an open question. It is the dogmatism that does the mischief—on both sides. On the one hand it has been dogmatism in regard to the assumed perfection of the letter of Scripture which has been the cause of the greater part of the serious and morally earnest infidelity of our times. There is, of course, much infidelity which is not serious, and much which comes through loving darkness rather than the light—of such forms of unbelief we do not speak; but I think it cannot be denied that a large proportion of the thoughtful and serious unbelief of our time has come through the suicidal policy insisted on by so many excellent people, which may be expressed in this way:—"If you have any difficulty in accepting the letter of the Scripture as absolutely correct from Genesis to Revelation, you must give the whole of it up." As soon as you pin a man to that terrible alternative, you run a grave risk that he will say, "Well, I should be dishonest if I said I had not serious difficulties as to the literal exactness of everything in the Bible, therefore I *must* give it all up." Such is the mischief of dogmatism on the one hand. On the other, it is dogmatism in regard to what are called the latest results of criticism, results which will perhaps be set aside before another week is gone, which has brought much of that which passes under the head of criticism into contempt.

As this is a matter of crucial importance, it may be well to take a concrete instance for illustration. Suppose, then, I have the story of Eden to deal with, and have reached the record of the Fall. I tell the story as it is, bringing out point by point its marvellous spiritual meaning. It is clearly for the sake of that spiritual meaning the story is there: and it is to bring this out that I am here with my class in the Sunday School. If, then, I am full of my great subject, as I ought to be, I shall find the time for the lesson far too short for anything beyond the opening up of that mine of spiritual truth. I have no right to spend my time in discussing the question how the story found its way into the Book of Genesis, at what time it took its present shape, &c., &c. So far good; but now suppose a bright boy in the class pops the question, "Was that a real serpent, teacher?"

Now, what I maintain is, that in the present state of opinion among good critics it would be a grave fault to say either yes or no. I should answer, "Some say yes, others say no; I agree with those who say—" (stating your own opinion); "but it does not matter in the smallest degree to our great lesson of to-day which of them is right. That is a question of the letter, and the Bible tells us that 'the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life'; therefore what I am anxious about is that you should know the spirit of the passage." And then I should at once set off again on the great spiritual lessons from which the question had for a moment turned us aside. Let us ever remember that we are not in the Sunday School to urge our own particular views on disputed points; nor, except as a means to our great end, to deal at all with questions which probably ought to be treated, and may generally be treated more safely, in senior classes; we are there to teach, first and chiefly, the great things on which all true Christians are agreed, and secondarily, those in which the denomination to which the school belongs are agreed; but we are not there to settle matters which are confessedly of such difficulty as to be left by all the great Churches in the category of open questions.

But some of you may ask, "If you leave such questions open, do you not unsettle the minds of the scholars?" My answer is that their minds ought to be unsettled on questions which are unsettled. The settling of the mind on a question which is unsettled, is most mischievous and in the highest degree dangerous for the future. Who can tell for example what dire mischief was done in the childhood of the late Professor Huxley, by those who succeeded in settling in his mind that the Bible must teach science with the rigorous precision of the nineteenth century or be utterly discredited! No one can read intelligently his anti-Christian writings without seeing that his fierce antagonism to Christianity was determined by the fact that he was taught in his youth to regard questions as settled which all intelligent Christians now treat as open, or as settled in the opposite way. What had been rubbed into him from his earliest days was the mischievous dogma that if there is a solitary inaccuracy in any reference which touches the domain of science in any of the books which make up the Bible, it is impossible to accept the Scripture as from God. As he grew up he became an apostle of science. Had he only looked at the Bible as reasonable men now look at it, he would have recognised in its grand exordium no petty attempt to anticipate the school books on geology, but "a great prophetic scroll exhibiting not the transitory face, but the divine meaning of nature"; and from that point of view he would have seen cause, not to despise it, but to admire it, even beyond men of inferior scientific training, as the finest epic of creation in all literature; and with the fortieth of Isaiah before him, or some of the great nature psalms, he would have bowed in reverence before "the wisdom and knowledge of God," in that He could so inspire men, who knew so little of nature and had such narrow views of the world and the universe, that they were able, in spite of all, to declare the glory of the God of Nature in words which have never been surpassed, or even approached, by men of the widest culture and the fullest scientific training. If only the minds of men like Huxley and Tyndall had been unsettled on the question of the relation between science and inspiration, how different might the history of Christian thought have been in the last fifty years! I do not say they would have become Christians—that is not the result of an intellectual process, but the work of the Spirit—but they certainly would not have spent their strength in sowing broadcast the seeds of unbelief; and if they had not accepted Christ themselves, they would at all events, well-meaning men as they were, have looked with favour, and not with deadly hostility, on the truth as it is in Jesus.

But while it is not the business of the Sunday school teacher to settle the minds of young people on all possible subjects, it is still less his business to unsettle them. It is one thing to deal fairly and honestly with difficulties when they are forced upon us; it is quite a different thing to raise the difficulties ourselves and force them upon others. There are rash iconoclasts who imagine that it is their duty to demolish things generally. They would pull a man's house down over his head, in the midst of a winter storm, for no better reason than that they think if they had time they could build a better one for him. I may have a clear conviction that the foundations on which my faith rests are very much stronger and more abiding than those of my traditional friend; but if I undermine his, am I quite sure that he will have mine? Our work should be done in the spirit of Our Master, who "came not to destroy but to fulfil." We should have a most tender regard, not only for the feelings, but even for what may seem to us the prejudices of those who have been trained in such dependence on the letter of Scripture, that whatever threatens it seems to them to threaten all. The work of the teacher, as of the minister, is edification—a most suggestive word in this connection—*edification*, temple-building. It was a false report which made our Master say, "I am able to destroy this temple and to build it again in three days." It was they, and not He, who would destroy the temple—His work was to build again that which they had destroyed. There are audacious persons who think themselves able to destroy the old temple of faith and build it again in a few days; but they over-estimate their powers. It may be necessary, in the course of our constructive work, to point out the weakness of some of the old positions and the great strength of the new; but it should be quite clear that it is edification we are aiming at—construction, not destruction. The net result of every lesson in the school—and may we not extend it and say that the net result of every sermon in the pulpit?—which deals with the sacred Scriptures, should be to exalt the listener's conception of the majesty and beauty and divine authority of the oracles of God. When a teacher or a preacher lays himself out to marshal in array what seem to him the imperfections in the sacred writing, even though he may have a few redeeming sentences or paragraphs on the other side, he is likely to do more harm than good. Whenever he has occasion to call attention to the fact that it is an earthen vessel in which the treasure is found, it should be for the purpose of making it the more manifest that the excellency of the power is of God and not of man. In guiding the steps of our youthful charges especially, we should see to it first that we are leading them up and not down, and next that the steps up are made easy to them, so that they may not stumble as they climb. There should be the utmost tenderness and consideration for all who have not had the same advantages as ourselves, especially for those who have not had the same opportunity for seeing the full bearing of recent research. Above all should we be careful in the instruction of the children and youth, remembering the solemn warning of our Lord: "Whosoever will cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

The PRESIDENT stated that as the subject of Dr. Gibson's paper was entirely distinct from the subjects of the two papers to follow, it would be well to have the discussion on it now.

Dr. RENDEL HARRIS, Cambridge, said he thought the reader of the paper was a little in danger of sailing down the channel of no meaning between yes and no, and that it would have been very much better had he been able to speak with any degree of confidence and to be able to say either one thing or the other. There was danger in too limited a conception of the Bible. It was the same mistake which led many to treat the Church as a building. They treated the Bible as a book, and were apt to forget there was a very much larger Bible open before them, which would in some respects give them information not found in the other. He had recently been spending a few days in the Kent cavern, and felt if he had ever read the Bible he read it there. They read in their Bible that Adam sewed fig leaves together and made himself an apron. Very well, the primitive man knew how to sew. That is all they could make out of that, but in the Kent cavern they could find the bone needle that he did it with. It was not a question of higher criticism, but of the educated sense of mankind that they should not on many matters say yes-no and no-yes. Let them at once bravely face the question, and say "Man is older than we thought him to be." A large part of his (the speaker's) life had been spent in unlearning things he ought not to have been taught when a child. If they could save time in the race of life the time to be saved must be saved as far as possible at the beginning.

The Rev. J. PANDY WILLIAMS, Derby, said that while he agreed with much that was said in the paper, he should have been better pleased had Dr. Monro Gibson been a little more definite on the question of the Divine authority of the Scripture, and how far the human element entered into the composition of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. If the Organising Secretary with all his capabilities could think out a plan by means of which they could form, at the great centres of England, training classes for Sunday school teachers, a mighty work would be accomplished. Unless this were done, then the Sunday school had seen its day.

Dr. MONRO GIBSON said that he was limited to twenty minutes, and he could not deal with everything in his paper.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Mr. HOWARD EVANS.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY MR. HOWARD EVANS.

This subject is not of my choosing; I have simply complied with the invitation of the Committee. My natural bias is to look at the bright side of anything, and if it has no bright side to turn my attention to something else. But it is not wise to ignore unwelcome facts. Pray do not accuse me of pessimism, for that is almost an unpardonable sin in a disciple of Christ. An auditor is not a pessimist because he seizes the first occasion to point out the weak points in a balance-sheet. A doctor is not a pessimist because he notes that his patient's pulse is irregular, or the temperature abnormally high. Such work, though disagreeable, is corrective.

They say that you can prove anything by figures; it may be so, I have never tried the experiment, and I never mean to. My business is to collect facts and tabulate them honestly, even if they tell against my own hopes and opinions. A statistical ostrich is about the most foolish of all God's creatures.

For the last two or three years I have had a strong suspicion that the results of Christian work are not what they ought to be. We multiply sittings much faster than we gain and train church members; we continue to build schools, but the number of children and young people inside our schools is almost stationary. We find it much easier to raise large sums of money than to win souls. This applies to all Churches—to the Established Church as well as to the Free Churches, as anyone knows who has examined recent Confirmation Statistics.

I am not going to look at this matter from an exclusively Free Church standpoint. In this way, perhaps, I may forestall the blind bigots of the Ritualistic press who care so much more for their own particular Church than for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, that they are filled with unholy exultation if the work of their fellow Christians languishes. This is not distinctively a Free

Church question; the Anglican Church is suffering in the same way as ourselves, and to as great a degree.

Let us take for granted the immense importance of our Sunday schools; we are all agreed upon that. It is true that they are of comparatively modern origin; but they have become the chief nurseries of our churches, and if they languish the churches will soon begin to languish also. My old Sunday school teacher, the late Mr. Fountain Hartley (for many years one of the Secretaries of the Sunday School Union), used to delight to tabulate the progress of Sunday schools; I should like to do the same, but that is impossible.

The first thing that should be borne in mind is that our Sunday scholars should be constantly increasing in numbers, and that unless they do so we are losing ground. We cannot expect them to increase as rapidly as the population, because the children of the upper and upper-middle classes are not to be found in our schools, nor can we expect to gather the children of Catholics, Jews, and aliens. But we may fairly reckon that our rate of increase ought to be that of the increase of infants in our elementary day schools, less an allowance of about seven per cent. for the Catholic and Jewish population. Now the increase in our infant day scholars is over 40,000 per annum, and deducting seven per cent. we have about 37,000. There should be this annual increase if we are to keep abreast with the growth of population, to say nothing of the existing heathen population untouched by any religious agency.

Yet another point. Sunday school figures are largely inflated. New scholars are entered in the books at once; but months often elapse before the names of scholars who have ceased to attend are struck out. The irregular attendants too are hardly worth counting. Very properly the Education Department, when making grants, reckons the average attendance in day schools rather than the numbers of scholars on the roll. My friend, the Rev. James Holmes, of Gunnersbury, who has paid much attention to Sunday School matters, recently stated in the *Christian World* that the average Sunday afternoon attendance is about two-thirds of the number on the books; and one of the Scottish Presbyterian churches, which records average attendance, gives like results.

Now let us go into details a little. For reasons into which it is unnecessary to enter I leave the Congregationalists and Baptists out of account. There are what an astronomer would call aberrations in their figures just now, which would make a comparison incorrect and misleading. Taking the other Free Churches then I find a net decrease of 8,291 scholars, and to them must be added a net decrease of 7,712 in the schools of the Established Church. Instead of a gain of 37,000 in the year, you have a loss of 16,003, which is 53,003 on the wrong side.

Unhappily the downward tendency is not confined to England and Wales. Similar results are visible in Ireland. The Irish Presbyterian Church shows a decrease of 4,000 scholars and 300 teachers. Let us now turn to Scotland, where I have included members of Bible classes as Sunday scholars. The Established Church shows a decrease of 4,000 scholars and 350 teachers; the Free Church of 4,000 scholars and 300 teachers; the United Presbyterian Church of 4,000 scholars and 300 teachers.

Most international statistics are not collected annually; but the Methodist figures for America as given in the "Kalendar" for the last two years tell the same tale. In the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States there is a falling off of 17,000 scholars, and in the Canadian church of 3,000.

It should be a matter for grave consideration that if infants were left out of account the falling off would be much greater. Mothers, who naturally want a little rest on Sunday afternoons, are as glad as ever to send us babies who are old enough to walk and talk. They arrive in increasing numbers. But the majority of big boys and girls leave earlier than ever. There is no doubt of this. The Established Church takes account of infants under seven years of age separately. It reports a positive increase of 10,000 infants, but yet a net loss of 8,000 scholars. The Wesleyans make a similar classification, and their latest statistics show an increase of 800 infants but a decrease of 4,300 above fifteen years of age. The Scottish churches show a similar decline in the numbers attending Bible classes, who are of course elder scholars. The Established Church reports a decrease of 2,300, the Free Church of 1,300, the United Presbyterian Church of 1,000.

Have I presented you with a gloomy picture? I am confident that you will have a gloomier one a year hence. Twelve months ago I had grave misgivings as to our Sunday schools, but knowing the danger of hasty conclusions, I waited to see whether a new set of figures would confirm my fears. They have done so. I am confident that we cannot hope for better results when the next two sets of figures are compiled. The South African war may have been necessary, justifiable, inevitable; but the churches cannot hope to escape its natural consequence of lean harvests. Apart, however, from that consideration, it would be foolish to shut our eyes to the general downward tendency to which I have called your attention.

What are the causes that bring about such results? As regards the children the main causes are probably the indifference of parents, and the loss of parental control at an earlier age than formerly. As regards elder scholars, to some small extent they are attracted by Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Services, so that the loss is not quite so great as would appear. As regards the falling off in teachers, the chief causes are an increased appetite for pleasure—I mean the innocent pleasures of cycling and week-end excursions—and the deplorably low ideas of Christian service which prevail among many of our younger Church members. If I indicate these causes, it is not that we should sit down and be satisfied with the results they are producing; on the contrary it is in order that we shall grapple with the difficulty, and resolve that by the grace of God this decline shall be arrested.

Mr. ROBERT WHYTE, London, was next called upon to address the Council.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE NEW CENTURY.

BY MR. ROBERT WHYTE.

If I appear to approach the subject of the Sunday School of the future without sufficient veneration for methods with which our great-grandfathers were familiar, it is not because of any want of sympathy with the Sunday school work of to-day. I am not quite an "outsider." It is some forty years since I became a Sunday school teacher; I am still a teacher to-day, and only one of the rank and file—facing my class every Sunday afternoon. There may be much in my paper with which you will not agree; but do not suspect me of criticism that is unsympathetic.

It is a mere accident, though doubtless one favourable to the inquiry, that we have the privilege of discussing Sunday school methods at the beginning of a new century. It is the broad facts, known to us all, which call for earnest scrutiny, and lie heavily on the hearts of all who love the Church and love the child. Almost the whole working population of England has been, in infancy and early childhood, in our schools. We have the promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"; and yet almost the whole adult working population of England to-day is outside all our Churches!

And now Mr. Howard Evans comes to us with figures, which I believe to be, broadly, unimpeachable, which show that we are losing ground. In England and Scotland, in Established Churches and Free Churches, our scholars are fewer than they were a year ago. Even the increase in attendance of the infants does not nearly balance the decrease in the numbers of boys and girls. And the increase in the number of infants is not a cheering symptom. It means that so long as children are so young as to require watching, parents use our schools as a crêche; but that, as soon as they are old enough to be able to take care of themselves, and not be a nuisance in the home on Sunday afternoons, the parents no longer care either to coerce or to persuade them to attend school. For the most serious falling off in numbers is not in the senior classes, as is commonly supposed. The leakage occurs, for the most part, in the early teens. As soon as, free from parental pressure, the children are free to spend Sunday as they choose, a vast and increasing number of our scholars exercise the freedom of their own will by playing truant first, and then staying away from school altogether.

This is too big a question for Sunday school conventions alone.

The Churches have no graver responsibility than that for the children. Waterloo may be lost as well as won in the playing fields. We hear the Sunday schools spoken of often enough as the daughters of the Church; there is a very real sense in which they are its mothers. It is from the children that the natural growth of the Church must come. It is from the schools that year by year young men and women should come to fill its pews and to swell the ranks of those who carry forward its work. When we realise the momentous issues, for the Church and for the world, that hang upon the success or failure of our work among the young, we dare not think of it as only a pleasant pastime for Sunday afternoons, nor leave it only for young teachers to consider. The wisest are not too wise, those in highest authority among us are not too important, to consider the problem of how to win the young for Christ. I am thankful to have the privilege to-day of discussing it with so many of the pastors of our churches, and of speaking to them from a teacher's point of view.

And first let me say, without boasting, but quite frankly, that we teachers do not consider Sunday schools to be a failure; far from it. Those who say they are do not know the facts. There is probably no teacher who has grown grey in the service who cannot tell of results, tested and proved results, which, when he measures them by the weakness of his own work, can only inspire him with thankful and wondering praise. But it is just such teachers who, because they realise most keenly the "now or never" of young life, and because they know best the possibilities of the Sunday school, grieve the most that the reapers do not return with ampler sheaves. And when it is borne in on us to-day that we are actually losing ground, we appeal to you to examine with us, with all your powers of heart and brain, the processes of our loving husbandry, that we may discover what is hindering the work, and what will enable us to do it better.

Seed, Sowers, Soil, Sunshine and Rain—they are all factors in the Harvest. The Soil we must take as we find it, the harder it is the more need of the best methods for breaking it up. "The Seed is the word of God"—we cannot improve that. Sunshine of God's favour, Rain of His Gracious Spirit—on these we can assuredly reckon. But the gathering out the stones, the ploughing, and the sowing—for these we are responsible. And if the precious harvest, year after year, disappoints our hopes, we are entitled, nay we are bound, to ask if we are doing these in the best way.

This is my starting point. Change, merely for the sake of change, is always to be deprecated; but "use and wont" are not to be honoured just because they are old. After the experience of more than a hundred years, and in view of the grave facts already cited, has not the time come frankly and fearlessly to test old methods, by this one standard.—Are they fitted, are they the best fitted, here in England and in this first year of a new century, to yield the harvest which God promises as the result and reward of our labour and on which our hearts are set?

It is not unreasonable to begin such an inquiry by considering the rooms in which our schools are accommodated, because these largely determine the methods in which Sunday school work must be conducted; and so they have a powerful influence on its results. Every well-appointed Sunday school has separate rooms for infants and for senior classes. These therefore we leave out of the account. But the arrangement by which all, or many, of the classes between are taught in one common hall, though no longer universal, is still so common that it may fairly be described as the rule. The advantage of having the scholars gathered together in one room, when the attention of all has a common centre, as for the opening exercises or for the superintendent's address, is obvious. But the advantage disappears, and the arrangement becomes a hindrance, and not a help, as soon as the community of interest is broken up, and each class has in its own teacher a separate centre. In such a room, with many classes in it, discipline becomes difficult; and discipline is a moral agent which no teacher—and a Sunday school teacher least of all—can afford to do without. The scholars, seated on three sides of a square, of which the teacher occupies the fourth, bend over "making an umbrella of themselves," as a racy speaker at a recent Free Church Council meeting wittily put it. The teacher's voice is not easily heard over the general hum, and the strain of listening to it, added to the constraint of the doubled up position which is irksome to young limbs, wearies the scholars and induces restlessness. Thus disorder is excited; it soon spreads, and is exceedingly difficult to repress. Such mild measures as the teacher might use if he were alone with his scholars are impossible in a hall full of other classes, and so, too often, his own class passes quite beyond his control.

Nor is this all. The teacher who has used all his powers to prepare his lesson, is prevented by the cruel conditions of the common room from using all his powers to teach it. He must sit, and stoop, and speak low. To enforce his points by gesture, or even by inflection of the voice, is difficult. His use of maps is confined to such as can be shown, under "the umbrella," from a pocket atlas. The blackboard, diagrams, and similar quite ordinary auxiliaries to teaching, are out of reach. To carry forward the lesson in a brisk series of questions and answers is impossible—you cannot conduct a lively *viva voce* in whispers—and so the teacher is reduced to a monologue, which almost inevitably becomes diluted sermonising. And, worse than this, the scholars cannot be made to read aloud in a clear natural voice; and so the teacher cannot know whether or not they understand what they are reading.

But a worse, because a more costly, evil—inseparable from the common room system—than any of these remains to be told. It is this: that the classes taught in it must be small classes; and so, even a small school requires many teachers. We have a splendid band of teachers; they are far more numerous than any other class of Christian workers; and yet in every Church there is a continual cry for more. Had Agur lived in our time he would have added a fifth to his list of things that are never satisfied. The Sunday school is as hungry as the grave. Its demands are too great to be satisfied by those who volunteer; and so urgent is the need that there is no scrutiny of the qualifications of those who are pressed into the service. There is no standard, even of knowledge, which they are required to reach; no test is employed to ascertain whether they are apt to teach. For the work of the ministry we prescribe a long course of study; we impose frequent examinations; we require the production of certificates. But from those whose duty it is to make what are, in too many cases, the first religious impressions on the heart at the time when it is most easily, and most permanently, moulded; from those who are to impart to the young mind its first ordered ideas of truth on the greatest of all concerns—from them we ask no proof of fitness; we do not even inquire as to their inward call. It is as if St. Paul had said: "Set them to teach the young, who are least esteemed in the Church." But this is not what St. Paul said. He spoke of judging, not of teaching. He was thinking of questions of property by which we set such store—not of souls, for which we act as though we cared so little. It was to the chief of the Apostles that our Lord said, "Feed my Lambs"; but we, without misgiving, hand over the lambs of Christ's flock to be nurtured by anyone coming on to the roll of Church membership, or even on to the register of our pews, who can be induced to accept the responsibility.

And this does not strike us as wrong: we do not even think of it as strange! It has always been so. And while classes continue to number only six, or eight, or ten, it must be so still. Yet it needs no demonstration that the very first step towards winning better results, must be to improve the quality of our teaching. And you cannot get good teaching except from good teachers; nor can you reasonably expect to find good teachers when your selection is to be made, as now it is almost exclusively, from the young and inexperienced.

But if the system of small classes in a common room is to be condemned, from the point of view of efficient teaching, it is scarcely less to be deplored from the point of view of the teachers themselves. These are mostly young, and pressed prematurely into the service. Some of them never have their hearts in their work. They have taken it up only, or mainly, because they have been pressed to do so; and when they find it irksome, and the difficulties too great, they give it up. But the earnest remain; and for those who are in earnest there is all hope. Prayer and pains will do almost anything; they will even make a teacher. But in many cases this will only be after years of struggle against conscious failure. Nor will the pain and disappointment they have to bear through their earlier years of discouragement be the only, or the greatest sacrifice they will have to make. They have their own minds to train and equip. They have to grapple with problems which confront themselves. The milk with which they have to feed the babes will doubtless nourish themselves also; but it will not satisfy their needs. For their own sakes, for the world's sake in which as Christ's men they have to play their part, they must feed on the stronger meat which is for them that are of full age. And most of our teachers do not belong to the leisured class; with their bread to win, and long hours to work, it is but little time they can give to Bible study. Which shall they neglect?—the weekly preparation of their lesson, or those graver, deeper studies which, as we have heard this morning, are needed if we would rightly divine, or even rightly understand, the word of truth? To teach without preparation is worse than useless, it is sin. To spend all their scanty leisure on preparation for the class, and to have no time to study the deeper questions which their own hearts and minds demand answers to, may be to make shipwreck of their faith. It is a choice between Scylla and Charybdis!

It is not denied, it is in fact part of the case we are trying to make, that the system of small classes in a common room has some real advantages which must not be overlooked. That a young Christian, with no experience of teaching, who would not dare to face a class of five-and-twenty or more, may be induced to undertake a class of five or six, necessarily commends the present system both to superintendents who are pressed for teachers, and to pastors who are looking for suitable spheres in which the young members of their flock may be initiated into the activities of Christian service. It is not to be expected, therefore, it is not to be desired, that ministers and superintendents should, without serious examination, welcome the introduction of new methods which, even though they promise better teaching and ampler results, seem to threaten to deprive them of these solid benefits.

But is it impossible to discover a method which, while it recognises the proper value of good teaching, and therefore requires teachers who are competent, and places them in an environment which permits them to do justice to themselves and to their task, shall yet find a place for young disciples in which they may do loving and lowly service without being taxed prematurely and beyond their strength? I think not.

If anyone supposes that I am going to propose anything startlingly novel as a model for the Sunday school class in the twentieth century, he will be disappointed when I say that the school of today, when class work is over and all eyes are directed towards the desk, and all ears open to listen to the superintendent's address, presents in broader and larger outlines what I think the *class* must become if it is to do the work we have a right to expect from it. Each class must have its own room in which, when teaching begins, all attention will be focussed on one centre. Curtains and cubicles are good, but quite inadequate. Each class must have a room to itself.

What the number of children in each class should be must depend on a good many considerations—on the size of the rooms available; on the powers, even on the voice, of the teacher who is in charge of it; on how many children are to be provided for of the same sex, and (as we should say if we were speaking of elementary schools) of the same standard. But whatever the number be, it will be broken up into sections of about the size of an average class now—say, not less than six or more than ten, with a preference for the smaller number. Each of those sections will be under the care of an assistant teacher, who will look upon the children comprising it as his own particular flock, and whom they will regard as their own particular shepherd. His will be the hand that welcomes them when they come in; his the voice that bids them good-bye when the hour is over. He will register their attendance in his own roll-book, look them up when they are absent, visit them when they are sick. In personal intercourse he will win their affection and become their friend. When the opening exercises are over, he will hear their repetition of the Catechism—*we have a Catechism now*—and other memoriter lessons, which I dare to hope in the Sunday school of the twentieth century will be recognised in their true importance and restored to their proper place. When this is done he will sit with his scholars, and contribute not less by his example than by his exertions to the attention and good order of the class. He will have no lesson to teach, and what is to him of more importance, he will have no lesson to prepare. The chief teacher, whose one class is composed of all such sections in his room, will then come to the front and teach the lesson of the day.

Let me pause to guard against a possible, even a probable, misapprehension at this point. Nothing is further from my thought than that the lesson to be taught by the one chief teacher shall take the form of an address. The dominant aim in all the suggestions I am venturing to offer is to secure better *teaching;* and the chief benefit which I anticipate from allotting one room to each class is that it will permit, if it does not secure, *teaching* of a kind and quality impossible under existing conditions. First, for instance, in point of time, and almost of importance too, it will be possible to have the passage of Scripture from which the lesson is taken read aloud, verse by verse, by the scholars, in turn; read so loud that all the class may hear, and so distinctly that the teacher may know by the intonation whether the sense is truly caught. Knowledge is like food; it is only what we assimilate that nourishes us. In all teaching which aims at cultivating the mind it is important that the ideas which lie behind the words and phrases used be seen and mastered—in religious teaching it is essential. Even Bible words do not act like a charm. Not understood they slip over the tongue without so much as ruffling the surface of the minds they are addressed to. Understood, grasped so that they present a clear image to the mind, they may be trusted to leave an impress on the heart. And the simplest way of testing whether the meaning is understood or not is to have the passage read aloud.

Next, it will be possible to carry almost the entire lesson through in a series of questions and answers—not put at haphazard, but planned so as to cover the whole field, and carefully directed towards drawing out what the scholars know, and finding out what they do not know, of the subject in hand. How fruitful this method is in the hands of a conscientious and carefully prepared teacher, all the more if he be skilful too: how it quickens and sustains the interest of all the listening class: how it fastens the points brought out in the lesson in the memories of the scholars, like "nails fastened by the masters of assemblies," those who have used both the hortatory and the catechetical methods alone can know.

Then the auxiliaries to teaching, such as are used in every elementary school, and which perhaps are more needed in the teaching of Scripture than for teaching anything else, may be brought in and used to the best advantage. The blackboard, large maps, pictures, diagrams—how without these can we convey to the minds of our little Western children any definite idea of that far-off land where the Lord Jesus lived on earth, or of the people from whom He sprang? And there are many other aids to efficiency in teaching, impossible in a common room, which it is natural and easy to employ when each class has its own room—the repetition all together, or by sections, of a verse which it is important to fix in the memory; the singing of a verse to relieve the strain of attention; the joining in a prayer where it is felt that a spiritual impression has been made, and may be riveted.

But, after all, the chief advantage we hope for is the improvement in the quality of the teachers. The economy of labour by which only one teacher will require to study, prepare, and teach the lesson, instead of five or six, is itself an immense gain; but it is a still greater gain that the smaller number will almost certainly be older, more experienced, and better teachers. Obviously it must be easier, in any congregation, to find one good teacher than to find five or six. And then this one teacher will have opportunities that are denied now to the five or six. Alone with his class he may forget everything except the work he has to do, and he may use all his powers, without restraint, to do it in the best way. These improved conditions, the graver responsibility, the increased hopefulness of result, will act as powerful inducements to good teachers to remain on the staff, even after they are married, and will, we may fairly hope, attract our best men to join our ranks as teachers. We shall no longer have the work left, as now it is too much, to the young and the inexperienced.

And for these young and inexperienced we shall be providing a real training school. The assistant teachers, on whose pastoral work we are still to rely, and who will now be set free for some years for the studies which are best fitted to equip themselves, will have the advantage of intimate association with their chief in the organisation and government of the class which they share with him; and every Sunday afternoon they will be able to profit by observing how a skilful teacher lays out, explains, illustrates, and enforces his lesson; what arts he employs to win and retain attention; how, without making any show of authority, he maintains discipline, and much besides, which can never be learned in so-called training classes, which are always held under conditions entirely different from those in which the actual work is done.

Nor dare I forget, though I am dealing only with methods to-day, that the true test of Sunday school methods is their success in bringing the scholars under the power of spiritual impression, and to decision for Christ. No thoughtful person would desire that the surrender to Christ should be made under the influence of emotion only; and yet those who have lovingly studied child-nature will know that emotion may be of inestimable service in preparing the heart as a seed-bed for the truths of God's Word. And in so far as this is true, the large class in its own room will be more effective than the small one. With children even more than with adults, the subtle influence of numbers tells, and the larger class, swayed by one heart, one mind, one voice, will be capable of being moved to tenderness, or roused to enthusiasm, to a degree which would be impossible, and even undesirable, in a class that shared with others a common room.

Ah! what a difference it would make in our work if we teachers ourselves believed that we have to work and pray for, and have the right to expect, immediate and solid conversions in the classes of our Sunday schools; what a difference it would make in the attitude of our Churches towards us if they believed it, too! Childhood we think of as a sowing-time; and so it is. But need we marvel if in God's husbandry the ploughman overtakes the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed? We think it quite natural and right that the membership of the Church should be fed from the minister's Bible-class; but we look with surprise, even, perhaps, with a shade of suspicion, on a boy or girl from the Sunday school who professes to love the Saviour and asks leave to sit at His table. Why? It was of a child that the Lord Jesus said, "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Sad and strange if our Lord still has to say to His disciples, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me!"

"But to carry out your plans would create a revolution in church building; and to provide such rooms as you ask for would overstrain our already sorely taxed financial resources,"—to which I would frankly reply, "Well, if nothing short of a revolution in church building will provide our schools with a proper environment, the revolution cannot come too soon." At whatever cost the welfare of the school must be secured. *Salus Populi Suprema Lex!* If in England in our day the masses are to be won for Christ the battle must be fought, and the victory won, in the Sunday school. Nowhere else does the Church get close enough to the world to lay her hands upon it. The artisans of England are not hostile to the Church; they cannot forget that when they were little children they were dandled on its knee. But they are grown up now and have gone from us; and they remain outside. Still, however, they send us their children; and if only the Church can discover how to keep firm hold of the lambs, the question of how to win back the sheep that have strayed from the fold will soon not need to be asked. Let the Churches believe this, and they will spare neither pains nor money to see their schools thoroughly equipped. And no expenditure would bring in a larger or more rapid return.

The evolution of church buildings has already begun. Our new buildings are not reckoned complete when they have a church, a hall, and a vestry. The central function of public worship in the Free Churches must always remain the preaching of the Word; but the church buildings are now no longer only places for hearing sermons in, and the additional rooms provided for various uses in almost every modern church are available as class-rooms on Sundays. Even old churches and small churches can do much; and indeed are doing it. I know one small church in a country town which by simple and inexpensive adaptation of existing rooms has provided ten class-rooms; each isolated from sight and sound of all the rest; and this is only one instance out of many.

I have given you only a bare outline of what, in my judgment, the Sunday school of the New Century should be—a school from which the common room is banished, and in which, in rooms thoroughly equipped, larger classes shall be taught, by experienced teachers, each with a staff of zealous assistants. There is much besides. I should have liked to discuss lessons with you, and the place examinations should hold in our Sunday schools; and also such week-day auxiliaries to Sunday school work as give us a larger grip of the young lives committed to us, and, besides all else they do, create *esprit de corps* among the scholars, and so prevent leakage in the best way, by making them wish to keep up their connection with the school; and, last but far from least, the relations between the Sunday school and the Church. But time is exhausted; and, in any case, it is probably best that I should present nothing to-day beyond the bare framework of my Sunday school in the New Century. After all, ideas rule the world. If you see with me how much depends upon our success in Sunday school work; if you agree with me that, under Divine blessing, success depends upon good teaching, and that the chief requisite for good teaching is to have a good teacher, and to give the good teacher a better chance; if I have satisfied you that one way by which we may secure better teachers is to ask for fewer of them now, and to provide a practical and much needed training college for the teachers of the future, then I am content. For I am sure you will ponder the suggestions I have made, and if they approve themselves to you, you will put them to the test. And if not, may God guide us all into His more excellent way. Your hearts care for the children not less than mine; you too pray and strive not less earnestly than I, that they may be gathered early into the fold of the Good Shepherd, for their own sakes and for the sake of the England that we love, and to the glory of the Christ whose work we are trying to do.

The Rev. **FRANK BALLARD**, M.A., B.Sc., urged that the revised version of the Bible should be read in all the Sunday schools. At present it was not used in one Sunday school in a hundred. There were at least a thousand errors in the so-called authorised version.

Mr. **ALBERT SPICER** said he had prepared Sunday school lessons for thirty-six years. He did not believe there was a healthier process for any public man to continue during his public service than the weekly preparation of the Sunday school lesson. Mr. Spicer went on to say that many ministers took very little interest in their Sunday schools. As President of the Council of the Sunday School Union he had never had the pleasure of seeing a minister present at the meetings of the Council. Comparatively few Unions sent up ministers as their representatives, for the reason that the ministers did not attend. Mr. Spicer said he was proud of the work that laymen had done for the Sunday schools. Yet they ought to look to the ministers for help. It must never be forgotten that almost every Hooligan was a lost Sunday scholar. Mr. Spicer concluded by saying that the term "scholar" was disliked by the rising generation. He suggested that the words "young people" should be substituted where practicable.

Mr. T. **GARDINER**, Buxton, said he had been for fifty years a day and Sunday school teacher. He commended Mr. Whyte's plan of training the young teachers for their work. He stated that many teachers did not prepare their lessons or visit their scholars. They must by all means get rid of the inefficient teachers. Let them find some other Christian work. He said teachers should be given larger classes, that would be an incentive to them to do their best.

Mr. **GEORGE WHITE**, M.P. (Norwich) said he had been engaged for forty-six years in Sunday school work. If the Sunday schools had good teachers, they would not now be discussing their inability to retain the older scholars. It was upon consecration and fitness for the work that the future of the Sunday school depended. Mr. White expounded the American system of training young teachers. About 150 children of tender years are placed in a large class-room. They are divided into groups of eight or ten children, each group in charge of a young teacher. For ten or twelve minutes this young teacher does his or her best to instruct the scholars. Then an elder teacher steps into the room and gives the whole class their lesson. This is a way of training the young teacher both to teach and to maintain discipline. They were not gathering in, Mr. White continued, as teachers those who were socially and intellectually the cream of their congregations. If they were to hold their Sunday schools they must give their best talent to teaching. The boys and girls in Sunday schools were nowadays quick and intellectual, and they would not put up with anybody as their teacher.

Miss M. JENNIE STREET said that thousands of those who were brought to Christ during the recent Simultaneous Mission were really the fruit of the labours of faithful Sunday school teachers. Miss Street suggested that the establishment of training colleges for Sunday school teachers should be taken in hand by the National Council.

The PRESIDENT then called upon the Rev. J. SCOTT LIDGETT, M.A.

THE RELATION OF THE FREE CHURCH COUNCIL TO PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

BY REV. J. SCOTT LIDGETT, M.A.

The subject which the Executive intended to be discussed under this title I understand to be, primarily, the relation of the Free Church Council to the various institutions of local government, such as County and Borough Councils, School Boards, Authorities for Secondary and Technical Education, although the institutions of more or less publicly managed philanthropy are not altogether excluded from view.

If this be so, the subject raises in a special form the question of the relation of Churches to politics. It introduces two modifications into the general subject.

In the first place the Free Church Council is not a Church, and is only imperfectly an association of Churches. The Councils are widespread, and, in a very general sense, representative. But they are voluntary associations; their members have varying, yet, at the most, only imperfect powers to commit the Churches as such to their action; while, on the other hand, these Churches have no power to dictate, through their own representatives, the policy which the Free Church Councils shall pursue. So far as the Free Church Council, either national or local, truly represents the attitude towards public questions of the Churches whose members take part in it, that reflection of their convictions is secured by general moral influence, and not by constitutional guarantees. Under present conditions the movement secures the greatest amount of influence and safety by being content with this imperfect and informal representation, which insures the expression, generally speaking, of the average sense of the Free Churches, instead of attaining a binding decision between divergent opinions and aims, by means of a trial of strength.

The Free Church Council, therefore, is a voluntary body, promoting inter-denominational fellowship and action, upon a basis which provides the *minimum* of formal, and the *maximum* of moral, representation of the Churches taking part in it. This fact gives in some respects greater latitude to its action, than exists in the case of any particular Church, while in other respects it restricts its action, owing to the lack of administrative authority, and to the need of recognising, in a society dependent upon the moral assent of its members, the subordinate differences of those who belong to it.

Again, public institutions, understood as pre-eminently the institutions of local self-government, stand for the administrative and local elements of politics. We are concerned with institutions, that is to say, which have to do with the being and well-being of the city, but are almost entirely limited not to the making, but to the carrying out of the laws, whether of Public Order and Health, or of Education, by the representatives of the people.

We must therefore discuss our particular subject in the light of the ruling principles which we hold concerning the general relation of Churches to politics, making allowance for the special differences which are introduced by the character of the Free Church Council on the one hand, and by the limitations of local institutions on the other.

The objection to the Free Church Council taking any action at all in such matters has received almost classic expression in the speech made by the late Dr. Dale in Birmingham at the time of the inauguration of the Free Church Council there. Dr. Dale then said:—

"There have been two methods in which the Christian Church has exerted its power over the ethical life of the kingdoms in which it has existed, and over the political action of those kingdoms. For three centuries it was content to address itself immediately to the great work of drawing those within its reach to the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord and Redeemer of men. It disciplined their character; it breathed into them a new spirit; they reached higher and nobler ethical principles, and large changes were wrought upon society as the result of that work. Then came a time when the Church was impatient of the slow progress which it made by that method; and if we descend a few centuries later we shall find the great Church of Western Christendom directly interfering as a Church in the social and political affairs of nations. In the hands of the great Popes, and in the circumstances under which that interference was made, I am not prepared to dispute the value of what was done for the civilisation of Europe by the Papal power. . . .

But we have come to the conclusion that the interference of organised Churches with organised political societies has proved, after all, a false method of effecting the great objects of the Christian gospel. . . . . I have always felt that the line to be taken is this: that the Churches should do all that they can in the power of the grace and truth of Christ to renew and sanctify all whom they reach; and that then Christian men—as citizens, not as members of churches—should appear in the community to discharge their duties to it, under the control of the spirit and law of Christ. The Papacy dealt with Imperial power. There seems now to have come a great chance to the Free Churches of the country to deal with democratic power. . . . ." ("Life," pp. 648-9.)

He goes on to express his opinion that the Free Church Council will not "be able to stop with pronouncing an opinion on questions that are practically before Town Councils and Parliament"; but that they "will be bound to interfere in local elections, both municipal and parliamentary," and he continues, "I do not want to see a Nonconformist party in Birmingham touching municipal elections. I do not want to see a Nonconformist party in Birmingham touching political elections."

In my judgment the situation foreseen by Dr. Dale with such apprehension is certain to arise whenever the Churches are strong, and when politics, general or local, seem to lack adequate moral guidance and inspiration. That was the secret of the interference of the Papacy in its nobler period with the "social and political affairs of nations"; the value of which for civilisation Dr. Dale was not prepared to dispute. The motive actuating the Popes was not, primarily, a desire to exert their ecclesiastical authority for selfish ends, though that, doubtless, was the mainspring of the Papal policy in the meaner times which succeeded. The greater Popes felt within themselves the power to remedy the social and political wrongs of their times, and, feeling the power, they were conscious of their responsibility for exercising it. That power, moreover, was made up in part of their own wisdom, faith, and moral strength, but in part also of the consciousness that they had at their back the mighty resources of the Church which they controlled.

And in all similar circumstances there will come to Christian men of high faith and courage the same sense of power and of responsibility; there will come also the same incentive to hurl the united forces of the Church upon the evil which has to be destroyed in the name of God. At such times small prudential considerations, or *a priori* theories of the respective functions of the Church and of the State will be unable to withstand the onset of an impetuous faith and courage, which will trample upon all such obstacles in the confident hope of advancing the Kingdom of God upon earth. Unless men, thus impelled, can find a force ready to their hands, they will call the Church into the field, no matter what the consequences may be.

And yet, remoter consequences there will be, and Dr. Dale has indicated of what sort they are likely to be. We must take account alike of the certain impulses of faith in seasons of moral enthusiasm and of the certain dangers, which, in ordinary times, will inevitably succeed them in the case of Protestants and Free Churchmen, as surely as in the case of Popes.

Let us try, therefore, to see in what direction a way lies by which the Free Churches may secure, in the promotion of social righteousness, the service, faith, and strength to be found in the Churches, without the danger of a self-contained and meddling ecclesiasticism, which in certain circumstances might be hardly less mischievous, and certainly would be more petty than that of the Middle Ages.

At the outset, it may be said that the difficulty would not arise if we had an ideal Church and an ideal State. We need not now speculate what would be the respective functions of the Church and of the State under such conditions. It is open to argument that the State would be absorbed in the Church, or that the Church as such, might altogether disappear, even as St. John saw no Temple in the ideal City of God. But at least, it may be said, that the Church would be neither secularised nor divided by contact with earthly concerns, if the men within it were what they ought to be. And in the same way there would be no danger of the Church becoming dictatorial on the one hand, or stooping to worldly compromises on the other, if character in the State were what it ought to be.

The following truths are clear. Firstly, that the Church is composed of citizens. None of its members can for a moment divest himself of his civic responsibility. He carries it with him into the life of the Church, and into his most intimate fellowship with God. He carries it there, that the sense of it may be quickened, and not suspended or destroyed. And, secondly, politics, whether of national or local institutions, should be governed by the spirit and moral influence of Christ, for Christ represents the ideal truth, towards the realisation of which all true progress advances. Law and administration should either carry out or facilitate, or at least be in keeping with these supreme spiritual and moral ends. Thirdly, the farther we go into the Church as such, the farther we leave behind us those immediately practical considerations with which men have to deal in their capacity as constructive or administrative politicians. And, likewise, the farther we go into politics as such, the farther we necessarily go from absorption in those supreme considerations which engage men in the Church. In the Church we have to do with motives and ideals; in politics, with the machinery and with the immediately practicable, and that chiefly on the more practical side. Most of all is this the case where not the making of laws but the local administration of laws already made is involved.

These being the standing conditions, it seems to me that the whole relation of the Free Church Council to public institutions must be settled at each moment by the practical spirit of Christian wisdom, strongly grasping the main conditions, and not by any *a priori* theory either in favour of or against Church interference with public concerns.

I would suggest that the following four positions may present a practical *via media* between the indiscreet attitude, which some Free Churchmen have occasionally taken up, and the position of Dr. Dale; always bearing in mind, too, the fact that the constitution of the Free Church Council and its comparatively loose representative character give it greater power for dealing with these matters than could be assumed by any Church as such, and that it will be the part of true ecclesiastical statesmanship to maintain it in this free and somewhat detached position, rather than to make the bonds of representation tighter and more formal.

In the first place we are all agreed that the ground of our union is in our common spiritual life and faith; and that common life and faith enables us unitedly to seek and unitedly to diffuse in every part of life all divine influences, including, of course, the manifestation of the Christian temper in and through public institutions.

In the second place we shall agree that a fairly universal consensus may be attained as to those supreme moral ends which all Christians should seek to realise in the community, in order to the prosperity of the Christian life. When further we unite to promote, say, Temperance Reforms, or the better Housing of the Poor, or the enforcement of just conditions of life and labour, and insist that the forces of administration shall be directed to secure these objects, we are asking either for the protection of Christian virtue from overwhelming temptation, or for the realisation in the city of those general conditions, without which the Christian life in the fullest sense of it cannot be lived. United action in enforcing our views on these matters upon statesmen and administrators does not carry us beyond the primary consequences to which our Christian life commits us.

In the third place, there may be emergencies in local life when the Free Church Council, in its loose yet real relations with the Churches as such, and gathering together men representative alike of Christian and public life, may have to take deliberate action even on political lines against social iniquity. If, for example, the local institutions of any city were to fall under the control of some immoral interest, and if that control were weakly acquiesced in by the ordinary political parties as such, either through cowardice or through corruption, it might be the duty of the Free Church Council, ignoring all risk and throwing to the winds all *a priori* considerations, to drive forth by political action such corrupting elements in the name and by the power of Him who purged the Temple with His scourge of small cords. Such action, however, it is to be hoped will be very rarely required.

Fourthly, and above all, it is our work not to sacrifice, but to complete, the spirituality of the Churches by training men in ever increasing numbers whose faith in Christ constrains them to go forth upon their own merits as public-spirited citizens to deal with politics, making it less and less necessary for the Free Church Councils as such, to interfere with them, because in connection with every institution are to be found men whose faith and wisdom and courage and strength have brought them to the front by the ordinary means of public life; thereby securing in the only satisfactory way the safety of Christian and moral interests by the weight and influence of Free Christian personalities. If this be the course of events there will be less and less need for the Free Church Councils as such, to intervene in the local administration. The earnest men who feel the call of God within them to remedy abuses will be surrounded in all departments of public life by men like-minded with themselves, upon whom they may rely without straining the constitution of Christian Churches as such.

Any other solution than this has insuperable difficulties as a working theory of public life. Apart from such strong personalities, reared in so ample a Christian atmosphere, Free Church Councils, as such, will doubtless intervene in the management of local life, but with less than no valuable result. They will either subordinate themselves to party political management, or by standing out from it and taking a line of their own, they will make administration sectarian and not civic. They will protect and push forward weaklings into public office, giving an improper support to inferior men on the ground that they hold a Free Church creed. They may even be tempted to decide the question who shall represent them on great administrative boards by considerations irrelevant to the concerns which are at stake; or, when they put forward no candidates of their own, they may endeavour to set up as a sort of moral inquiry agency for which the necessary powers are wanting, and in which they are absolutely certain sooner or later to be duped. The Free Church Council, special emergencies apart, will therefore best serve the administration of its city or town, neither by meddlesome interference with it, nor by attempting to be represented as such in its political caucuses, or even on its administrative boards; but by training men, who, representing its views and coming under its influence, have at once the strength of character and the breadth of conception, which will cause them to secure its great ends by the weight of their own influence and the persistence of their own efforts, in the ordinary arena of public life.

The Rev. F. T. SNELL (Acton) said his Council had commissioned him to place before the meeting a resolution in favour of immediate steps being taken with regard to the teaching of temperance in day schools.

The PRESIDENT said that as notice of the resolution had not been given it could not be submitted.

The matter was referred to the General Committee.

Mr. JAMES EVERETT (London) said that in South London the Free Church Council had from the start made it their business to see that the right men got on the Councils. They issued manifestoes, and candidates who declined to come up to these manifestoes were opposed by the Council, and the Council got their men in. He thought Councils all over the country should make themselves similarly felt, especially on the temperance question. It was not for them to stand still and see other people take up their work. Public representatives, if not exactly Christians, should at least be men of high moral character. Mr. Everett also narrated what the Central South London Council had done in suppressing disorderly houses.

The Rev. J. HIRST HOLLOWELL said that the Councils, if they ran no candidates themselves, should at least support candidates. Some questions, though of politics, like that of Armenia and Bulgaria, lay heavily on the conscience of the Free Churches. Were they to be left to the party wire-pullers? The educational laws as at present framed were an insult and an injustice to the Free Churches. There were 13,000 schools in England receiving £5,000,000 a year of public money, and yet to be a Nonconformist was to be disqualified for being a teacher in these schools. Nonconformists, too, were excluded from thirty of the forty training colleges. They were now facing the severest educational crisis the country had ever seen. Every Free Church Council in the country ought to spring to its feet and prepare for a struggle with the Government, which would make the present an historic year in the history of Nonconformity. When politics ceased to interfere with Free Churchmanship, and when the laws of England ceased to interfere with religious liberty, they might take a position of neutrality in politics.

The Rev. Dr. TOWNSEND said it would be an evil day for the Council if it ever became a party political power. They could only do the enormous work before them by maintaining themselves entirely above all political combinations or parties whatever, and devote themselves mainly to forming a high moral and political sense throughout the nation. As to the drink question and other great moral questions, the Councils must not work indirectly only. It was right that they should train men, and when they trained them they must stand behind them and fight the battle.

Mr. WILLIAM CROSFIELD, J.P. (Liverpool), said that in Liverpool they had already done what Mr. Snell in his resolution asked them to do.

The Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, in replying, said that his ideal was that every Free Churchman should be a Christian citizen steeped in a political spirit, taken up not because he was unspiritual but because he was completely spiritual. When all Free Churchmen became spiritual politicians they would not have to rely upon the comparatively difficult and fitful action of special bodies, but would have a solid phalanx of men heart and soul true to their great ideals as Free Churchmen.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

The Council reassembled at 3 o'clock. Devotional services were conducted by the Rev. G. H. Turner, London.

During the first half-hour of the session the voting-papers for the election of the Committee were distributed and collected. The President announced the following as the Scrutineers:—Mr. A. T. Davies (Chairman), Revs. G. S. Smith, David Oliver, J. T. Barkby, A. E. Killon, J. P. Treloar, J. B. Petts, W. Downing, S. C. Challenger, Mr. Charles Hayward, Mr. J. Belcher, and Mr. George S. Hirst (Convener). In addition to the above, twelve of the Cardiff stewards rendered valuable service in counting the votes.

THE FREE CHURCH GIRLS' GUILD.

Mrs. Price Hughes was to have moved a resolution concerning the Free Church Girls' Guild, but owing to illness was not able to be present. Miss Hearn ("Marianne Farningham") took her place. Before Miss Hearn addressed the Council the Organising Secretary read the scheme of the Girls' Guild, which was adopted by the National Council at Sheffield in March last year.

Miss Hearn moved the following resolution:—

> "This National Council would urge on all the local Councils throughout the country the great importance of carrying out during the year the Free Church Girls' Guild adopted at the last annual Council. It would suggest that each Council should at once form a sub-committee for this work, associated with a central bureau to be opened in London."

Miss Hearn said she had no doubt as to the need of such a Guild. There were thousands of Free Church girls and young women who needed help in a variety of ways. The Girls' Friendly Society of the Church of England was a splendid society, but the Free Churches needed a society for their own girls. The girls of the Free Churches were of an independent spirit, and she hoped the Guild would be thoroughly democratic, and that it would embrace girls of all classes. In her own class, Miss Hearn stated she had girls of all Churches and of all positions of life. There was, some time ago, a strike in Northampton. Thousands of girls were thrown out of employment, among them some of Miss Hearn's girls. The richer girls gathered together £20 to lend to their poorer sisters; but Miss Hearn could only persuade three to accept the loan of £1. A noble spirit of independence filled the hearts of Free Church girls, and the Guild would be a help to them in every way.

The Rev. Dr. TOWNSEND seconded the resolution. He said they ought to have a Girls' Guild in every church and Sunday school. The Guild must be kept on high lines. The meetings must be suffused and interfused with true spiritual life and power. Nothing would draw the girls so closely together. They must use a sanctified ingenuity in trying to make the Guild attractive to all classes of girls—factory girls, domestic servants, and others. Many of them had little to brighten their lives.

The resolution was unanimously carried.

The next business was the discussion of the question, "Is Our Preaching as Effective as it Ought to Be?" The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., was to have opened the subject, but owing to illness he was unable to be present, and his paper was read, at the special request of Mr. Hughes, by the Rev. Thomas Law.

IS OUR PREACHING AS EFFECTIVE AS IT OUGHT TO BE?

I.—BY REV. H. PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

Mr. President,

It is a very great sorrow to me that I cannot be with you to-day. One of the greatest of annual delights is the opportunity of meeting so many brethren, of so many Churches, at this Council. But this year my doctor prohibits me from being with you, although you are meeting, I have no doubt greatly to your advantage, in my native land. The subject of discussion I was to have introduced in a brief address, asks—"Is our preaching as effective as it ought to be?" I confess to a long-standing conviction that very often it is not; and I believe that its comparative failure in effectiveness is due to the fact that some among us confound theologising and commentating with preaching. To be a theologian is one thing; to be a commentator or expositor is another thing; to be a preacher is a third thing. The same man may be all three. But my main point is that it is quite possible to be both a theologian and a commentator or expositor, without being a preacher. On the other hand, whatever else anyone called a preacher is, he ought, at any rate, to be able to preach in the ancient Scriptural sense of the expression.

One of the happiest events of our own time has been the discovery of the great place which the "prophet" filled in the New Testament Church. The re-discovery of some ancient books has brought to light the fact that there were in the Early Church a number of influential "prophets" or "preachers" who possessed extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and were provided wheresoever they went with every possible facility and encouragement to "preach" or "prophesy."

The prophets of the New Testament were not men who predicted the future, except in the sense that those who have the necessary gifts to discern the eternal realities of the present, inevitably indicate the tendency of events. It is a matter of the deepest significance that in the Pauline list of the officers of the Primitive Church the apostles and the prophets came first, then the evangelists, and last of all the pastors and teachers. I have a great deal of sympathy with the eminent American writer who said that a few years ago our Churches, in the great cities, were "in full retreat before the masses," because the Churches, in their unconscious selfishness, had sacrificed the apostle and the prophet to the pastor and the teacher. In other words, our organised Churches had become so selfish, and were so intensely anxious that their ministers should give them the latest information with respect to the Bible and the things of God, that they had persuaded those ministers to neglect their duty to the unreached and unconverted, and to devote to Christians time and service that ought to be employed in evangelising the multitudes of the unsaved. Wherever and whenever there has been a great revival of religion it will be found that ministers of religion have turned from Church members to the unsaved, the unconverted, and the outcast. It seems to me that the great Simultaneous Mission in which we have just taken part, is a most encouraging sign of the times, and a glorious indication that we are recovering the partially lost art of effective Christianity.

One of the greatest misfortunes in the history of organised Christianity, is the way in which the bishop and the pastor have taken the place which in the Early Church belonged to the apostle and the prophet. The bishop was originally, to a great extent, a Church officer dealing with finance and organisation, and he occupied a position quite subordinate to that of the apostle and the prophet. The primitive Church was built upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets," not upon the foundation of the bishops and pastors; and we shall never recover the fidelity and prosperity of primitive Christianity until the preaching of the Gospel, with the Pentecostal power of the Holy Ghost, everywhere resumes its primitive place. Being a bishop and a pastor myself, I desire that all due honour should be attached to those important offices; but the supreme need is to preach the Gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost. I was very much struck some time ago by an invaluable pamphlet from the pen of my venerable friend Dr. Guinness Rogers.

A Congregational Church which had not greatly succeeded, suddenly became very prosperous. Dr. Guinness Rogers enquired into the story of this marvellous improvement, and was informed by a representative of the Church that they had been "a society of the saved," but they had now become "a society of saviours." God grant that the same blessed change may come over all our Churches. The members of our Churches instead of incessantly demanding the time and attention of their ministers, should themselves take part in the work, and urge ministers to devote their main energy to carrying the war into the enemy's country and destroying the strongholds of evil.

When Christians tell me that they want those whom they call their ministers to dance attendance upon them, I tell them an anecdote about one of the Roman Emperors who went to a Public Bath, and while there saw a man rubbing himself against the marble wall. He asked the man why he did so, and the man replied that it was because he had not enough money to pay anyone to shampoo him; whereupon the Emperor gave the man a small sum of money. The next time the Emperor came to the Bath he saw a hundred men rubbing themselves against the same wall. "Oh, you rascals," he exclaimed, "you will not be able to humbug me thus: there are so many of you that you can well arrange to shampoo one another." In the same way there are so many Christians in our churches that instead of demanding so much from the preachers, they ought to minister to one another's need and free the preachers for aggressive work. The one point I wish specially to emphasise is this, namely, that the main appeal of the preacher or prophet, as distinguished from the theologian or commentator, is to the human *will*. There have been times and circumstances when it may have been necessary for preachers to devote much of their time to teaching theological truth and to mere exposition; but in the present day theology is most effectually taught through the printing press, and the best expositions of Holy Scripture are in book form. Theologians and expositors stand in the same relation to prophets and preachers that solicitors occupy in relation to barristers. My learned theological friends instruct me in theology and in the great law books of our faith. My business is to interpret their excellent technical language into ordinary English and to apply it to the souls of living men.

The main difficulty of the pulpit in England is not to convince people of the truth of the Christian religion, but to convince them of the necessity of submitting to the personal authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, here and now. I believe that in days to come we shall all preach abstract doctrine less, and personal devotion to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, a great deal more. I believe the history of all successful preaching in all ages proves that its main efficiency arises from such a presentation of the real, living Christ to the living audience, as induces men, then and there, to submit themselves to the personal authority of Jesus Christ or to submit themselves to it more fully than before. The only real antidote to that strange conception of the Church which has gradually led to the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope of Rome is such a constant preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as will teach all men that there *is* an infallible Pope but that His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Man cannot ultimately rest in abstraction, or theory, or mere organisation. He needs a personal devotion, and the only effective antidote to all mistaken forms of personal devotion, is so to present Christ with all His claims—I do not say merely or mainly to the thought or to the emotion, but to the conscience of men—as to induce them to accept Him as their living, personal, present, all-sufficient Saviour, Teacher, and King. When His Real Presence in the midst of us is properly grasped, there is no need and no room for anyone to act as His vicar.

IS OUR PREACHING AS EFFECTIVE AS IT OUGHT TO BE?

II.—By Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A.

I am not about to indulge in rash dogmatism, and I hope I am not about to fling abroad any indiscreet aspersions upon the preaching of any of my brethren. I would rather that what I had to say to you to-day should resolve itself into a series of questions which every man may apply to his own life and ministry.

The preacher.—What is he? Behind that one simple New Testament word "preacher" there are half a dozen original words, each of them with its own distinctive colouring, and each of them contributing its own quota to the description of this mighty office. If I turn to the original word, of the translation of which we have just given the one word "preacher," I find many most pregnant suggestions. The preacher is a herald, he is the public crier who is crowned with the imperial proclamation which he has to announce from the house-top with the urgency of the Sovereign command. The preacher is an evangelist with a message that is almost a song, laden with tenderness, soft and sweet as the tones of a wooer, laden and bright with the promise of gladsome day. The preacher, he is a logician engaged in strenuous reasoning, seeking to bring the loose and incoherent thoughts of men into close and well-knit spiritual decision. The preacher, he is a conversationalist; sometimes laying aside the spacious air of the public official and disregarding all the formalities of linked, well-reasoned discourse, he engages in homely intercourse, in fire-side speech, with his fellow-men.

Now, these are some of the suggestions descriptive of our office which I find in the sacred Word. We have to gather together the essential significance of a public herald, an evangelist, a wooer, a tender, familiar conversationalist, and then, binding all together in one wealthy suggestion, we have some conception of the wealth of the New Testament meaning of a preacher of the Gospel of Christ.

The preacher.—What is his function? I will turn to the Epistle to the Romans, and quote a classic passage in that wonderful letter. "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Reverse the order of the sequence, and how then proceeds the vital succession? Preaching, hearing, believing, calling, saving. What are the extreme terms of the series? Preaching, saving. The ultimate aim of all preaching is the salvation of men. Salvation from what? From sin? Yes. From hell? Yes. From infirmity? Yes. From moral stuntedness and spiritual immaturity—from all arrested growth in the Divine life? Yes: the strenuous purpose of all vital and fruitful preaching is to lift men from the servitude of sin and out of spiritual babyhood, and to lift them up in the spacious life and light of the glorious liberty of the children of God. Well, now, my brethren, if this be the preacher and if this be his function, I think we may begin our self-investigation, and I would almost wish (forgive the personal appeal) that we could now put aside all applause, that we might put away the excitability of the public meeting, and have around about us the solemnity of public worship. My brethren, in talking about preaching, the only right posture is on our knees. Even to applaud may interfere with the searching self-examination out of which may come eternal fruit. I will, then, begin the inquest of my own heart. If this be the preacher and his function, I want to raise this one question. Do we keenly realise the horrors of the bondage from which we seek to deliver men? Has sin become a commonplace? Does it no longer create a poignant pain? Do we shudder at its loathsomeness? Has repulsion been relaxed? Can we toy and trifle with things from which our forefathers shrank aghast? The questions are not altogether irrelevant, but are warranted by the conditions of our time. There is proceeding in our time a certain toning down of language which may be wise, or it may be unwise, but which is full of most fruitful suggestion. We don't like, my brother preachers, the bald, bare, sharp, ragged, jagged words in which our forefathers described the loathsomeness of sin, and we are busy filing them and smoothing them and diluting their loud and glaring colour. I am not afraid of changes in phraseology, if the changes do not indicate a degeneracy from decisive strength into mincing dilettantism. The substituted word may be more cultured, more refined, but if its content be thin and impoverished, I am afraid of the change. "Vile and full of sin I am." The word "vile" may offend our ears, but what is the cause of the offence? When I take up, as I did the other day, a version of "Rock of Ages," and find the word "vile" has been excised and replaced by the word "weak," I am afraid of the change. "A guilty, poor and helpless worm." We don't like the word, but why don't we like it ? Is it because we have acquired a less stringent conception of sin, and do these hard, severe words appear too severe, so that we require a milder phraseology for a less appalling conception of the enormity of sin ? Is the yearning for more exquisite words and refinement the expression of spiritual culture and growth, or does it indicate a partial benumbment ? "There is a fountain filled with blood." Let me say it slowly. "There—is—a—fountain—filled—with—blood—Drawn—from—Immanuel's—veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains." A FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD. I tell you I don't like it. I don't like the elaboration of the figure in the verse, and there are many to whom the wording of the verse is almost offensive. In many refined Christian hearts it awakens a repulsion. Well, I may dislike the elaboration of the figure, but I want the dislike to be safe, and I want it to be illumined. If I drop the particular phraseology, if I drop the elaboration of the figure, I want to retain the tremendous sense of sin that lies behind it. If I refine the word, I don't want to gild the sin. If I obtain a more cultured vehicle, I want to express the same unclean, loathsome presence. I covet no phraseology which will lend respectability to sin. I think we all know it is possible to have finer poetry with less convicting power. We may intensify the polish and the glitter, and lose the lightning. My brethren, polished, dilettante speech never satisfies a preacher who is possessed by a profound sense of the exceeding bitterness and loathsomeness of sin. Well, now, does that sense pervade our preaching ? When I preach to the people from Carrs Lane pulpit, have my people the feeling that I am dealing with trifles, or that I am dealing with appalling enormities ?

There is a word in the prophecy of Ezekiel which often rings through my heart when I am preparing the message for the pulpit, "And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's ink-horn by his side and said unto him: Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." Set a mark on the forehead of every preacher who sighs and cries for the sin of his city. How many of our foreheads would be marked ? That "sigh" (do you get the word ?) That sigh, even when in the feast, because of the sin of the city, because of the abominations thereof. It breaks into the festivity. It interferes with the speech. He sighs and he cries. His sighs and cries burden his prayers. It colours and shapes his petitions. He cannot keep them from his speech. Is it that with us ? How many of us have lost a night's sleep because of the sin of the city ? If we don't feel sin to be horrible, preaching is a plaything. If it has become an unaffrighting, undisturbing, commonplace, it is one of the greatest causes of the comparative inefficacy of our preaching. If we think little of the disease we shall loiter on the way to the physician; if we do not feel the heat, the perilous heat, of the consuming presence of sin, there will be no vehemence, no imperious urgency in seeking to pull men as brands from the burning. My dear friends, the first step to the wakening ministry is a deeper consciousness of sin.

May I ask another question? Are we possessed of a spirit of sensitive sympathy? I wonder if you have noticed (I should not be surprised if you have) when the Apostle begins to enumerate the graces and virtues of the sanctified life, he puts in the primary place, compassion. "Put ye on a heart of pity." It is part of the essential equipment of the true preacher of the Gospel of Christ. It is part of our equipment, which may be most easily and perilously destroyed. I would like the folk in the gallery who are not in the Christian ministry, and the lay folk below, to listen to one of the great hardships of the minister's life, one of the perils of the Christian ministry. We have to be in such continuous and imminent peril of losing our compassion. When first I entered the Christian ministry as a young man, I used to have a wondering, a trembling fear, whether my young timid faith would be able to bear the continual revelation of suffering and sorrow, bereavement and death. I wondered whether my young sensitive heart, when it was brought continually face to face with sorrow and suffering and pain—whether my sensitiveness would engender doubt and nourish spiritual revolt. Ah! the character of the problem has been long since changed. My problem now is, not whether my faith can endure daily contact with suffering and pain and grief. My problem now is this, whether my faith can endure a calm undisturbed familiarity with these things. We ministers have to be familiar with things, which when they come infrequently bring benedictions and melt men into compassion, but when they come very frequently they tend to make us hard. At first I could not conduct a funeral without tears; I could not read the Burial Service without my speech being choked. But now I have had so many funerals, I have seen so many people in sorrow, I have seen so much suffering, that I can read the Burial Service without tears. Well, perhaps, this is part of the gracious providence of God, that the burden should be eased, but I don't want the ease, if it be at the cost of losing the compassion with my fellow men. I would rather have the tears; I would prefer the choking speech; I would prefer that my not too strong body should be tired out, drained out twice, thrice a week if I might only keep my compassion with my fellow men. If we lose our compassion, our power is gone. Our sympathy is the parent of our discernment. If we have no sympathy, we have no vision; the finer our sympathy the more exquisite our discernment. "When he was yet a *long* way off, his father saw him." That is the kind of discernment I want. I want to know when a man is just beginning to turn heavenward. Not only in the inquiry room, but further, further back than that, when the divine life is just beginning to stir in my brother, just when he is beginning to wake to the consciousness that God is, and long before it is registered in speech or reflected in the face—aye, when in the face there may be the index of revolt—I want to have a heart of compassion so sensitive, that thrills to the faintest stirring of the brother far away. I want my compassion to discern his breathings, and if the man in the pew feels all my keen sensitive sympathy, that I can discern the faintest goings of the soul, he will permit me to be his guide. But if my compassion be dried up, my people will know my benumbment. My preaching, my brother, when I stand in my pulpit, if I be dried up and hard, will fall like a shower of gravel, and not like a shower of soft and refreshing rain. If the compassions get dried up, get near to the springs, "I will come down like showers, I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valley. The desert shall become a pool, and the dry lands springs of water." If we are losing our compassion, it is one of the causes of the inefficacy of our preaching.

May I ask another question? I scarcely know how to phrase this question, but I will put it thus (I hope you will catch the word). Is the wooing note present in our ministry? The wooing note? If we do not realise the horrors of bondage with a profound and exquisite sympathy with the bound, the tender notes of a lover and the wooer are not heard in our speech. I am going to ask my brother ministers, is not our preaching too uniformly severe? Is there not too much in our preaching which savours of the judgment-seat, and too little that is fragrant with the winsomeness of the fire-side? "Out of the throne proceedeth thunder and lightning." Aye, but out of the throne proceedeth also the River of the Water of Life, the gracious River of soft, healing, redeeming Grace. I express my own fear that the thunder and the lightning are rather too prominent in our ministry. I do not see and feel enough of the gleaming, gracious river. I think we want more tenderness and less scolding; we want more wooing. I think we need to drive less, and I think we want to constrain more. "Compel them to come in." I am glad the R.V. has taken out the word "compel," and reads "constrain them to come in." Woo them in. Go back to the wooing days, think of all the little devices, all of them legitimate, employed in order to woo the affection of one you love. Think, too, of the little tendernesses paid, of the kindly abounding services rendered when even the flickering of the response seemed to be a repulse. How you multiplied your attentions and nursed the gracious awakening. Every great preacher is a wooer. Turning to the Old Testament Scriptures we might expect the wooing note to be absent. Amos is severe in speech, stern in expostulations, multiplied in denunciations; yet you find that even stern, thundering Amos sometimes lays aside his thunder and begins to woo. And as for Hosea, he is the wooer even from beginning to end. Turn to Isaiah at the end of the chapter in which there is poured out denunciation and woe, he lays it all aside and begins with, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, speak right up to the heart of the people, go up, whisper to it, comfort ye my people." He was the great wooer. My brethren, we need to woo our people. "Jesus, Lover of my soul." Preacher, lover of man's soul. Woo them! woo them! Speak a little more tenderly next time. Drop out the thunder and put in constraint, and where the thunder has failed the lover will succeed. Not only in the Old Testament Scriptures, but right through the Bible, you will find this wooing and constraining note. I am perfectly sure it is too absent from my ministry. Months ago I determined that there should be more of the tender lover in my speech, more of the beseeching speech of the Apostle Paul, more of the gentleness and tender constraint of my Lord.

Let me ask another question. Has our teaching and preaching a New Testament emphasis? You think I ought to put that first. I did not want to put it first, and I will tell you why. I don't want to give it undue emphasis lest I appear to suspect my brethren. I don't think they are far away from the great cardinal verities of the Christian faith. I believe they are very near the centre, and they keep to what they conceive to be the primary realities of our religion. But even though we be agreed upon it in our own practice, there is no harm just here to re-emphasise our belief and practice. Many conditions and aspects of truth we present, and many stern obligations to the people, obligations to the Church, to civic life, the state—wherever the preacher has to proclaim great and imperative duty, it must always find its root very near to Calvary. The Apostle Paul, proclaiming what appears to be a common-place duty, goes back for the roots right to Calvary's Tree. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it." And if he is talking about meats, he says, "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." When he is proclaiming a duty he links it to the crucifixion, to the crucified Christ. He drives all his duties home with the power of the Gospel of the crucified Christ. All his tools are armed with one handle. I don't know anything more ineffective and more provoking than to have a gimlet with no handle on it. You cannot drive a pricker far without a handle, and you can't get a gimlet far into the wood without a handle, and you can't drive a duty, you can't prick man's conscience to the very core, unless you handle the duty as Paul handled it, and drive the duty home by the power of the crucified Christ. And therefore, I say, have we got that emphasis in our teaching, and do we make it quite clear and apparent? When we have proclaimed a duty, is the dynamic just as clear? When we present an ideal, are the resources as conspicuous? Do we link all our imperatives to the power of the Gospel of Christ?

One other question and I have done. My brethren in the ministry, do we appreciate our own message? Do we often look as though we revelled in it. There is nothing so helps a man to a good meal as to sit down with a man with a good appetite; and there is nothing so alluring to people of right taste, in showing them how gracious the Lord is, as to let them see we revel in the diet. "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord." And why is he blessed? Because such a blessing as delight is contagious, his enthusiasm is catching. When you see a man bubbling over, delighting in God, you yourself seem to be unsealed. Your very enthusiasm will be found contagious to your flock. "Thy word is sweet"—when we say it do we look as if we knew it. "Thy word is sweet"—do we say that with a sour face? "My meditation of Him shall be sweet." When our people see that we revel in our diet, they will try our food. Now I would like to repeat my questions if you will allow me. We don't repeat quite enough in our preaching. Let me repeat my questions, and I will sit down, having repeated them. I ask then before my God and Lord who is here, do I hate sin? The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Do I feel sin to be loathsome? Am I possessed of a tender sensitiveness that can discern even the faintest movings in the hearts of my people, and which reveal to them their inclinations long before they receive any outward expression? And, Lord Jesus, have I been a wooer, a lover, and is anybody in Thy Kingdom because they were just enticed into it by the tender persuasiveness of my life and speech. Have I been a wooer? And have I linked my duties unto Calvary, and has my teaching New Testament perspective and proportion, and have I delight in my own message? My brethren, I pray that our people may find new power on Sunday, because we have met to-day.

The Rev. **G. Campbell Morgan** said he was sure the message of Mr. Jowett came immediately from the Master. He felt sure they had all looked upon their work with a new and passionate desire to fulfil their highest ideals of it. They could only live up to that ideal if they lived always at the Cross in fellowship with the living Lord. There must be a perfect identification with Christ in His Cross. He prayed for himself and for all of them that their fellowship with God might be such that in the days to come they might be able to fulfil the high ideal of the preacher's work that had been set before them. He felt that he wanted to go home to examine himself in the light of Mr. Jowett's questions.

The Rev. **John McNeill** said they must keep up the element of personal surprise in their preaching. Might God always give to the preacher himself a new great and glad surprise, surprise that he himself is the sinner whom Jesus came to save, that he himself is the prodigal from the swine-troughs whom the Father was now sending to bring other wanderers in. Might God give to them preachers a perpetual glad surprise at their own salvation. "He brought me up out of a terrible pit and from the miry clay, and

He set my feet upon a rock." They must never get away from their personal surprise at their own salvation.

THE SECRETARIES' CONFERENCE.

A CONFERENCE of Council and Federation Secretaries was held at 5 o'clock. The meeting, which was very well attended, was held in the Cory Memorial Hall. Tea was provided by Mr. John Cory, J.P., D.L., who, much to his own regret and the regret of the Secretaries, was unable on account of ill-health to be present. The Secretaries permitted the Rev. John McNeill, Gipsy Smith, and other persons not Secretaries to remain. The proceedings were private. But we may say here that there was a full, frank, and helpful interchange of ideas and experiences. Special attention was given to the question, "How is the Mission to be followed up?" The Conference passed off in an agreeable and successful manner. The method of procedure adopted by the General Organising Secretary was at the very beginning of the proceedings to mention five or six Secretaries who had been engaged during the year on some special work, and to invite these brethren to make short practical speeches, giving to their colleagues the benefit of their experience. But from the first the Conference was open. A vote of thanks to Mr. Cory for his hospitality was passed.

THURSDAY.

MORNING SESSION.

The Council re-assembled at 9 o'clock. After devotional services, conducted by the Rev. G. S. Smith, of Sowerby Bridge, a sermon was preached by the Rev. James Owen, of Swansea.

STANDING IN THE GOSPEL.

By Rev. James Owen, Swansea.

"Wherein ye stand."—1 Cor. xv. 1.

That is, in "the Gospel," which the Apostle defines, or describes in the following verses. It is God's spell, God's speech. It is not a human discovery, it is not a product of philosophy, it is not an improved system of ethics, excelling all previous codes in its stringency and comprehensiveness; but it is a story, a narration of facts, not legends that have sprung from superstitious fears, or poetic fancies, but facts that form a part of the history of the race. The facts are these:—that Christ died, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day. And these facts do not stand alone; but they form the centre-piece of a great, complete plan. He died, He was buried, He was raised on the third day, "according to the Scriptures." Through the ages one purpose has been running; and in all history the central figure is Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, and in whom all things consist. According to the plan, according to the prophecies, conscious and unconscious, according to the Scriptures Jesus Christ died, and was buried, and was raised on he third day. These are the facts; but there is something more neetded in order to find a Gospel in them. The purpose of the facts, the mind, the will of the Divine worker behind these outward historical incidents must be taken into account. "That Christ died for our sins." It is this that makes the facts of the death and the resurrection a Gospel to mankind. Take this purpose into account, and the facts are brimful of interest to all. The Cross is the Altar on which human hope rests, Calvary becomes the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

This was the Gospel that was preached by Paul; and he knew whereof he testified. There is need to emphasise this; for according to some teachers, not even Paul and John fully or rightly apprehended the thoughts of Jesus, and inspiration itself did not preserve them from exaggerated or extravagant statements. My own strong conviction is, that no theologian of to-day apprehends the thoughts of Jesus better than John, the beloved Apostle; I do not think that any living minister of the Gospel knows "the mind of Christ" better than Paul did; I cannot believe that any German professor or English writer can interpret the facts of the great history better than Peter, "full of the Holy Ghost." Paul knew whereof he testified. The Gospel which he delivered unto others he had himself "received"; he had not invented it, he had not supplemented it; he had not embellished it; he had "received" it. He had not only brought his logical faculty to bear upon it, and had intellectually laid hold of it; but it had laid hold of him, in conscience, in will, in heart; it had been tried in the crucible of his own changeful, painful experience; and he had proclaimed it with a power that captivated the people of Corinth; and they received it; and the Apostle adds, "wherein also ye stand."

I. We have, then, to bear in mind at the outset that the Gospel must be *in us*, before we *stand in it*. On one occasion Jesus Christ said concerning the *diabolos*, the tempter, "He stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." This is a profound and suggestive saying. We cannot stand in the truth, in the truth which is without us, which God makes known, in the truth of Revelation, if we have not truth in us as an abiding and controlling principle. We cannot stand in the light of God, while the darkness is yet dwelling and ruling within us. We cannot stand in the truth, while the black lie is within, debasing the soul, poisoning the blood, wasting the energy, wounding conscience, keeping the postern open for the entrance of all kinds of temptations. To stand in the Gospel, we must first of all receive it. It may be in the book; it may be on the lips; it may be in the creed; but book and creed and lips are not enough; it needs to be written on the red-leaved volume of the heart, to be received as "the implanted word." You may understand a problem, when at the same time it is of no interest to you, except as the solution involves a mental effort which strengthens and disciplines the mental faculties. You may understand the contents of a will, full of legal verbiage; you understand it; after moving your finger from one side of the parchment to the other, and considering the phraseology, you understand it; and then, let us say, you have a personal interest in it; your name is mentioned in it; you *receive* the words, you remember them, you act upon them. If you have no poetry in you, Browning and Tennyson will speak to you in vain; but if your heart responds to the poets' numbers and is set on fire by the genius that throbs in every page, then you "receive" the words, they are enshrined in your memory and soul. So they who "stand in" the Gospel, first of all "receive" it. It enters like the glory of the Shechinah into the innermost sanctuary of their being; dwells in them, becomes a part of themselves, a new conscience to them, their inward, unerring law.

II. Having received it, then, *it supplies us with a sure standing-place.* There is certitude; there is rest; there is firm footing, the rock. "Wherein ye stand." Many questions agitate and perplex the mind of the conscientious inquirer: he would seek and find for himself, and not be content with the results of the investigations and researches of others. He asks, What is the relation of God to man, of man to God? Is God thinking upon us? Can we be saved from the wrong of which we are conscious? What will God do with us at last? Great questions: and we find a clear answer to them in the Gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures. There is no incertitude here, but a positiveness that inspires confidence, a dogmatism which has none of the arrogance that is commonly associated with the term, but which befits a message from the True God. As there is no uncertainty in the laws of nature, and the world has been built in truth, and the chemist has no doubt as to the success of his experiments, so "the voice that rolls the stars along speaks all the promises." It is not the possible or the probable we have here, but an unwavering assurance. It is not on a "peradventure" we rest, but on the "Verily, verily" of the Son of God. It is this tone of certainty that makes the Gospel such a welcome message, that makes the Bible such a welcome book. "Thus saith the Lord." "Faithful is the saying." Martyrs did not shed their blood for an untried theory or a hazardous speculation. They "knew Whom they believed." Of course it may be said, they thought they knew, but they were influenced by a strange hallucination; they were living in a dream; yes, and "the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure"; it has been a very powerful dream, it has been a very fruitful dream; it changed the lives of those to whom it came, it gave a new direction and tone to their character, it delivered them from selfishness, and made their influence and work serviceable to mankind. Call this a dream; then I know not what is real; the human consciousness is a lie, and human goodness is an illusion. No, no; we do not wander, blinded and bewildered in the mists, when we receive the Gospel of Christ; but we get into touch with the Real, the Permanent; our feet are planted on the firm granite. "Wherein ye stand."

The certainty of the Gospel, then, calls for a certain unfaltering faith on our part. The faith that "stands" in the Gospel is one that sends its roots down through every fibre of our being. A friend, writing to me lately, said: "I do not disbelieve Christ and Christianity—far from it—and yet my belief is a hope and a desire rather than an assurance. I do not fully, unquestionably realise that there is a future life, and an inheritance of the saints in light. I wish it may be so; I *think* it may be so; but I am not sure that it is so, so sure as to be willing to commit myself unreservedly to it. I am on a plank in a great sea, tossed hither and thither, rather than in a vessel steering for a promised land." This may be the experience of many to-day; they have a hope, a wish, that the Gospel may be true, but they have no certainty; and corresponding to the revelation of God there is not the clear-cut stamp of the faith that says, "God is true."

There are many who are fickle, who are "blown about with every wind" of opinion or doctrine; who look with Athenian curiosity for the "new thing," who welcome any new fad or fashion in religion, who have a weakness for religious fortune-tellers; who find fault with all the denominations, scoff at their number, and then swell their number by becoming a little sect themselves.

There are many who have simply inherited their religious beliefs; they have never made them their own by study, by reading, by prayer, by life; but a set of opinions has come down to them just like a set of books; a number of traditions have been transmitted to them like keepsakes, and they are kept as curios, kept for ornament, kept from veneration of the past, but representing no personal thought, or labour, or affection; and therefore in any crisis they may be given up without much regret or sense of loss. It saddens one to think of some young men thoughtlessly, lightly, yea ostentatiously, giving up truths which their fathers and mothers counted dearer to them than life, for which many brave men suffered the loss of all things, and parted with their heart's blood rather than surrender them. The steadfast faith that corresponds to the well-attested Gospel is not a traditional faith, not a superficial belief, not a vague opinion, not a compliance with custom, or an act of homage to popular feeling; but it is a personal, complete reliance on the truth; it is a "standing" in the Gospel of Christ.

III. Now, I observe that this stability does not mean mental or moral stagnation; it does not preclude growth. There is plenty of room for growth within the zone of the Gospel. We cannot measure it; we cannot fathom it; we can never exhaust it.

It is possible to embrace a creed made for us by others, and to boast that during our whole life we have not wandered outside the four walls of such a creed; but surely no one has any right to say that Calvin or Wesley was infallible; they were true to their own powers, and their own attainments, and their own light, but they did not see all; and we are to be true, not to them, but to ourselves, and the revelation of God to us. Some persons are afraid when they hear of "progressive theology," as if it signified the substitution of a new Gospel for the old; whereas it simply means that our knowledge of the mind and will of God is progressive. John Foster was weary of certain forms in which evangelical truth was presented in his day. Old forms, old phrases, may, like old coins, be so worn by constant use as to lose the clear image and superscription; they need to be minted afresh. The outward form of the truth may decay, while its inner essence is unchanged, or is renewed day by day. Jesus was accused of destroying the law; but He was only destroying the husk that the kernel might be preserved, that the inner spirit and meaning might live for ever. "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." Certain forms of theological thought and expression may be discarded, certain phrases may become obsolete, partial statements of the truth may perish, but it is in order that the truth itself may be seen in its greatest fulness and grandeur. I would not complain of the winnowing and sifting to which the inspired writings are subjected. I would not call the critic an infidel, or the searcher an enemy of the truth. Let us not commit the serious blunder of fighting for a traditional and unimportant interpretation of a book or a verse of the Scriptures, as if the whole authority of revelation depended upon the maintenance of that opinion. Whatever view we may hold in regard to Old Testament criticism, let us not imagine the sum and substance of the Gospel to be bound up with such a question as that of the authorship of the book of Deuteronomy, or the second part of the book of Isaiah. Let us not stake the fate of Christianity on any interpretation or theory in regard to the structure of the Old Testament; or say that the Gospel stands or falls with the failure or success of some daring Old Testament critic. The national life of the Jews was a part of the education of the race, and it was full of revelations of the supernatural; but it does not follow, nor is it very important, that the lists of names we have in the books of Chronicles are absolutely correct. What most concerns us is the spirit or aim of the revelation. Moses wrote of Christ; Christ quoted from the Old Testament as an inspired revelation; and the great use of the Book is to lead to Him "to whom all the prophets bear witness," and "who expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." We need not fear that any criticism can undermine the Rock on which we stand. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," but we have much to learn of His truth and grace. You may outstrip fellow Christians, but you can never outgrow Him. As in climbing the mountain you aim for one peak, and think that is the highest, and as you reach it you see another rising before you, and when you reach that, then another; so on the heights of spiritual truth we see before us always some peaks we have not gained, summits that invite us upwards, and on each summit we see the form of the Christ who says, "Come up hither." "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding." Dig for it as for gold; search for it as for a priceless treasure; work for it as for daily bread; pray for it as for life. By thought and research and prayer, we can add cubits to our spiritual stature; and although it is the same Christ the aged believer trusts in and loves to-day, as when sixty years ago he kneeled and said, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, Look upon a little child"; yet he sees more to-day, he knows more to-day, he has learnt more of the amplitude and glory of the Gospel, "wherein he stands."

He stands *independently*. The Apostle said, "Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for *by faith ye stand*." By your own faith you stand, not propped up by priest or minister, but standing on your own two feet. Cardinal Vaughan said, that among Protestants, "everyone was his own Pope." Well, I would rather be my own Pope than submit to the authority of Rome, and swallow without inquiry any patent mixture which sacerdotal charlatans may offer. The invitation of the Gospel is "come and see," inquire, examine, learn, choose. It has nothing to fear from light; it does not put a barred gate across the path of free inquiry and print on it "No thoroughfare"; it is not a secret of wizards "that chirp and that mutter"; it is the open message for all. We are under great obligation to the expositors and theologians, who have given us the fruit of their thought and study, but they are not our dictators. We have missed the meaning of their life and service, if we do not make their graves the starting-point of a race God has set before us. "By your own faith ye stand." "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

We *stand* in the Gospel, in opposition to error and sin. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to *stand* against the wiles of the devil." "*Stand* therefore, having girded your loins with truth." The Gospel is more than a philosophy, or a creed; it is a redemption; and to stand in it is to be conscious of its power unto salvation, to be bathed in the atmosphere of its truth, which influences the whole life, and enters through every pore of the spiritual being.

There is need of this stability in the present day, in view of the incertitude with which some endeavour to be content, and which is strangely regarded by them as a sign of intellectual grip and power; in view also of the growth and spread of superstition. Priestism is becoming bold; endeavouring to regain its ascendency; to tie a bandage around the mental eyes, and to break the backbone of conscience; and the Christian people of this principality and of Britain must face the question, "Shall we give up the Gospel that has brought such blessings to this land, that delivered it from the darkness that rested as a pall on its towns and villages, that came as the voice of the archangel and the trump of God to awaken the dead from the sleep of indifference and unbelief? Shall we give it up and accept as a substitute the mummery of ritualism, and become the slaves of priests?" No, no; whatever progress we may make in our knowledge of the Scriptures, and the more progress the better; whatever new service we may undertake, and love may flow in different channels—yet we hope ever to stand in the Gospel, not to depart one step from the faith that sustained confessors in prison and martyrs at the stake; that comforted the Waldensians in their mountain fastnesses when the hounds of persecution pursued them; that inspired with courage the hearts of Wyckliffe and Huss and Luther, so that the gates of hell did not prevail against them; that clothed with invincible might reformers and evangelists and missionaries, who subdued kingdoms for Christ, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, waxed valiant in the fight against sin, and won the victory that proved its power and gathered fresh trophies in our Simultaneous Mission. In this Gospel, stand; *old* Gospel, call it if you like; *old-fashioned* Gospel, call it if you choose, though it is ever new, and "big with glories yet unknown"; in this Gospel, stand. Having proved, *hold fast.* You are exerting an influence on young people; you may become conductors of the electric spark of Divine influence; your words may be the embodiment of the Divine, so that God can say: "A body hast thou prepared Me"; in your voice may speak the voice that can awake the dead; in your lamp may flash a light "that never shone on land and sea"; you are influencing and moulding other lives; and if you are hesitating and wavering, in a state of equipoise, what wonder is it that young men and maidens put the great questions of life off to a more convenient season? In view of your mission as witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, *stand* in the Gospel. You are being saved by it; cleave to it. O, Christ, if others go away, we will abide with thee. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

"I have a life with Christ to live,
But ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this, and that book's date?
I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply?

Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly, sweet,
'Come unto Me, and rest,
Believe me, and be blest!'"

The President then called upon the Rev. Dr. HORTON.

THE LORD'S DAY.

BY REV. DR. HORTON.

There are two points that I would like to lay before you this morning in the half-hour that the Secretary has kindly permitted me to occupy. One of these points is the importance of distinguishing between the civic sanction and the religious sanction for the observance of a Day of Rest. The other point is the religious use to be made of the Day of Rest, especially in reference to what we call public worship.

Now I look at the first point, the importance of distinguishing between the civic sanction and the religious sanction of the observance of a Day of Rest. We find that in the very earliest code of English legislation—the laws of the West Saxon King, Ina—the observance of Sunday was already strictly enforced. According to that legislation, if a slave was compelled to work on a Sunday by his master, he was *ipso facto* liberated; and if a free man worked on a Sunday he was *ipso facto* enslaved. Now I imagine that that law was passed in deference to the authority of that religion which the Saxons had embraced. But it might have been passed on purely economic and social grounds; and the economic grounds for such a law hold to-day much more decisively than it did in the days of Ina, of Wessex. For instance, I find in the "Encyclopædia of Social Reform" (which does not attempt to deal with this matter from a religious point of view), that the observance of Sunday is advocated on purely industrial grounds. It mentions, amongst other things, that if a mason or carpenter takes a contract in Paris, he finds he gets his work done quicker, cheaper, and better, by taking over English labour, because the French *ouvriers* work seven days in the week. It was said by Edmund Burke, that any country that surrendered the seventh day of rest rapidly relapsed into barbarism, because, in his opinion, the modern world cannot bear the nervous strain and the work and worry of seven days in the week. And you will remember that the most laborious life in the last century, the life of Mr. Gladstone, was, according to his own statement, made possible by his scrupulous observance of the seventh day as a day of rest. He said, at the end of a laborious career of nearly fifty-seven years, "I attribute, in great part, to that cause the prolongation of my life and the preservation of the faculties I still possess."

Now it is on the ground of such economic views as these that I believe that the Parliament of a free people like ourselves might, with a much greater degree of rigidity that it does at present, secure the absolute observance of a public day of rest. I believe that Parliament might, for instance, absolutely prohibit every form of work, simply on the ground of the industrial future of this country. I believe it might also prohibit the publication of papers on the Sunday, simply on the ground that there is not enough truth in the world to occupy seven papers in the week. And I believe Parliament might impose restrictions upon travelling, on the ground that I am advocating, much more severe than any of us have ever yet thought of. We in London can do without our letters on Sunday, and that shows that other people in the country could do so as well. Some of us in London could do without letters six days in the week very well indeed! But I never heard of anybody in London who felt in any way restricted or injured by missing his letters on the one day in the week. Now it would be possible for Parliament to prohibit all these forms of labour that I have referred to without ever mentioning the question of the Christian Sabbath. And the point that I want to lay before you is this, that it is of the utmost importance, at the present time, that we should, as Englishmen and citizens, endeavour to secure the seventh day of rest simply and solely upon economic and social grounds. If we could induce Parliament to secure it for us, the people would gladly accept the apparent restrictions, because the deliverance from the shrieks of engines, and the rattle of tramcars, and the shouts of newspaper boys, and all the other disturbances of our modern life—to escape from these miseries of the modern nerves for one day in the week, would presently make this country passionately in love with the seventh day of perfect peace, and you would have the people regarding that day with just the same scrupulous care, and the same sense of personal responsibility, with which the people always regard the public park which is directly placed under their control on the ground of their public honour; and a strong public opinion would make any man, who for selfish purposes, either of greed or pleasure, violated the sacred secular day—it would make any man who in that way sinned against the community a marked man, who would not venture to risk his reputation by this act of treachery.

The importance of putting this on the ground of civic or economic welfare rather than religion, I think ought to be clear to us all. It should be put on that ground first in the interests of religion itself, and second, in the interest of the Day of Rest. First, in the interest of religion, because directly you bring your religious sanction to bear upon Parliament, and try to induce Parliament to maintain your Sabbath Day for a religious purpose, you cease to make it religious, for you have introduced the element of the law which robs it of religious value. And I believe that nothing has more seriously injured the religious value of Sunday, in our country, than the fact that for many years it was enforced on the Statute Book by civil penalties. But it is of value also from the point of view of keeping the Day of Rest itself; because if you require a man to keep the Sunday on the ground that it is the law of God, man is so constituted at present that he will resist it. But if you require a man to keep the Sunday, because it is better for him and necessary for the community, he will give way. If your doctor tells you (assuming that you are an ordinary Englishman) to take medicine, you do it on the strength of his prescription, but if he makes the mistake of telling you to take it because it is the will of God, you won't take it at all. It is the will of God that you take the medicine, but English minds, and most minds, are so constituted that directly the will of God is introduced in any sense as coercion from without, they will resist and resent. What I may call the civic or secular Sunday would be observed by this country with the most extraordinary devotion and patriotism for the economic and civic welfare that would result from it. That point I believe to be of great importance.

But the second point I should like to put before you is to my own mind of much more importance—that is, the religious use to be made of our Sunday, especially in regard to public worship. Now I suppose the idea of the religious Sunday was never better expressed than in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." I believe, while the civic Sabbath aims simply at securing rest from work, the Sabbath in the religious sense aims at securing us rest from ourselves, and it is that rest which most of us really need. We need a rest from our own waywardness and wilfulness, from even our own pleasure, even the opportunity of carrying out our own ideas. And the Sabbath, according to this view of the prophet, is to afford us that opportunity of absolutely sinking our pleasures and of surrendering our own interests, in order that we may find our life where our true life must always be, in the will of God, the will of God absolutely overriding our own personal will. If you come to think of it, every human life really consists, if it is true life, in its conscious relation to God. And yet our life as we live it in the pressure of business and the excitement of pleasure, is constantly deviating from the consciousness of God. And the object of this Christian Sabbath seems to me to recall us, to correct the deviation, to bring us consciously to our real bearing, as lives that are hidden in God. And the object of the Sabbath being thus to restore men to their true lives, we cannot too sacredly consider how it will best accomplish that purpose.

Now I look upon the worship in the House of God as of the greatest possible value for that purpose. With regard to the sanctuary—sanctuary, according to the meaning of the word, is a little place fenced in, where a man can recover himself from the strain and the rush and the disturbance of ordinary human life—I believe that the sanctuary as a place of open communion and of the restoration of the spirit would be a Godsend to many human beings to-day; and some of our friends, like Professor Rendel Harris, who believe in a quiet worship, have a great mission for the present day if they can only make clear to the strained modern nerves that worship is settling down quietly in the presence of God, that the life may be recovered by contact with Him. But we cannot disguise the fact, the tendencies of the present day are strongly against public worship.

I was told only the other day of a lady who affects the fashionable world, that she described a man (intending to convey the most severe and contemptuous censure) as that sort of man who goes to church twice on Sunday. And I find in London that, not only amongst the irreligious people but even amongst professing Christians and members of the Church, there is an extraordinary disregard to the worship of the House of God, a total indifference to it; even the idea that the religious life can be preserved quite well without it. Now, when people say that they can worship as well in a room, or in the open air, as in the church, I think the answer is not whether they can but whether they do. And I think we ought to protest against that self-delusion which leads many men to mistake the pleasure of nature or even the peace of a quiet morning at home for that restoration of the spirit in the presence of God which is the real object of worship.

Now, amongst these people who are giving up the worship of the House of God, I think that it is constantly said that they do not get any good from it, and they find it *dull*. It won't seem a paradox if I maintain that one great value of public worship is that it is *dull*. According to the description of the prophet Isaiah, the object of the Sabbath is very largely to get a man from his pleasures and to recover him from the more easy current of his own desires. It is a very important part of public worship that it should be a discipline to you, and that it should cost you something. I have no doubt that it was very *dull* for Moses when he climbed Mount Sinai in the heat of the desert. I have no doubt it was more than *dull* for Elijah when he penetrated the desert and crept up the side of Horeb to that awful communion with the Invisible. I have no doubt it was more than *dull* for the Son of God when he went to Gethsemane and to Calvary. And what we have to make this modern world understand is, that the way of life is a *dull* way. It is not the primrose path of dalliance that leads to the heights of God. It is not what seems pleasant to you that is realising the intention of God in your creation. And I do protest against the idea that the object of our Church worship is to make a pleasant entertainment that would really attract the people to the church as distinct from attending the Sunday concerts which are provided now in London on every side. I don't propose to put up outside—"My church is a way of religious worship which will compete successfully with the concert in the Queen's Hall." I rather propose to put outside (if only I might), in broad letters that all could read, "Here is the hard and painful ascent to Heaven; let a man who has a soul enter and try to climb." Let every Church be known in the better sense as a *sancta scala*, a sacred staircase, where on bended knees we climb into the clear air and the sweet communion of Heaven.

We are on the wrong tack when we try to get attractions to bring people to Church. I hope I am not running counter to the modern tendency to improve the worship and architecture of our places of Prayer. But I sometimes long myself for a plainer building, for simple and broken accents in singing instead of such faultless renderings by the choir. You and I, too, have condemned the attractions of ritual and the attractions of the cathedral service, and the college chapel services with which I used to be familiar. But I have made the discovery that the objections to these ritual attractions is not that they take that particular form, but that they are attractions at all. That is the objection to them. And therefore I take just the same exception to the attraction of oratory as to the attraction of ritual; for some of us, especially you people who live in Wales, the attraction of oratory is greater than the attraction of ritual, for you would rather hear an eloquent sermon well delivered than see the most stately ritual in the cathedral. Permit me to say the result of both may be the same. Spiritually you may be no better off by being pleased with an eloquent discourse than by a ritual performance. Do you remember what St. Paul said? There was nothing he dreaded more than what he called the enticing language of oratory. He thought it might injure the effect of the Cross. In my opinion it greatly injures that effect. And let us just try to realise that if by preaching or ritual or music you give the people the idea that you are trying to please them, that you expect them to come to the church because they will be pleased, you have already sanctioned the principle that when they cease to be pleased they are at liberty to stay away. Do you remember what Lord Melbourne said to our late beloved Queen when she proposed to make her Prince Consort a king? The rough old statesman said to her, "Madam, you had better not encourage the people to think that they can make a man a king, for you would be teaching them that they can unmake him as well." And in just the same way, when you have encouraged the people to think that they are to come to the House of Prayer because they will be pleased by it, you have encouraged them to think that they can stay away if they are not pleased by it.

Therefore, what I want to urge upon you is that you deliberately and even ostentatiously put aside all these attractions, which are supposed to draw people to the House of God. I am asking for a great reversal of a tendency that has been growing amongst us; I am asking for a revolutionary change, and I would not venture to do it were it not that I understand that the effect of the present method is that our congregations are smaller and our churches worse attended than they were thirty years ago. I do not dogmatically say these methods are wrong. I simply point out that they have failed. The masses are more indifferent to public worship than they were; ever since you have been trying to please them they are less pleased with worship than at any time in the past history of the world. For my own part I utterly decline even to try to please them. I will have no attractions in my church unless they are the austere and awful attractions of Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary. And let me remind you, my dear brethren of the Free Churches, that while we disdain attractions to draw people to the church, while human nature is what it is, and while God is what He is, there will be attraction in the truth, as it is revealed to us, which reaches men more than the most delicious music and the most ravishing oratory. We are in such a critical condition in our human life that what we really want (I speak for myself) is not to be amused. I am a little ashamed when I have been at meetings where there has been laughing, and where they have broken into applause every few minutes. What I really want is someone who can bring me down on my knees; someone who can make me feel the terror of the sin that destroys and the glory of the salvation that saves. What I really want is to have my heart broken rather than to be pleased; to have my soul cleansed and purged rather than to be delighted. You may depend upon it that this idea that has got abroad in the present day that the one thing that is unpardonable in a preacher is to be dull, has led us away from this supreme fact that men are not unwilling to be *dull* if dulness means that they are introduced into the Eternal Presence and are searched by the eternal truths.

Now may I just say a word to my fellow-ministers here before I close. I was told the other day the story of a minister which we will hope is not true. Still it illustrates my point. A minister who had gone to a certain strange church had mislaid his notes. When he got into the pulpit he was in a state of great consternation. After feeling in every pocket he discovered that there were no notes, and so he said nervously to the congregation, "I am afraid this morning I must trust entirely to the Lord; but," he added, "I shall hope to do better this evening." Now we hope that story is false; but does it not reveal the most curious tendency of us all as preachers? I know it reveals my own nature to me. When I heard that story I knew exactly what the man meant—that sort of subtle idea that to trust only to God is a kind of second best; and that if only we use our talents and our gifts and our accomplishments, we shall do something better than to trust to Him; and the consequence is that we give up preaching those hard and rugged truths about sin and propitiation and redemption and the powers of the world to come, with the feeling that if we talk about the things of this present life, if we give our present experience and amuse and entertain the people, we shall be doing better. It is true, of course, that we do better in one sense. We get better congregations, but we don't do better really. It is better to have a congregation of one or two people, and one of them brought to the Cross, than to have a crowd all going away saying what a fine sermon that was. You see the whole object of our ministry is not to exalt ourselves. Believe me, you have failed if everybody is talking about you. The whole object of our ministry is to get hidden behind those eternal truths which it is our privilege to present but it is not our privilege to manipulate. They are the eternal truths of God, and we the loyal standard-bearers of the Cross are just to put them before the world and lose ourselves behind them, and let the rugged strength of God do the work, for He alone can do it. Now it is in the light of that truth that I believe the Day which is the subject of our discussion this morning, the Day we call the Lord's Day, is to be recalled to its original purpose. I should like to think that from here we shall go away, one and all liberated from the notion that our object is to fill the church and convinced of the truth that our object is rather to bring men to God. And the Sabbath day is not to be a day of religious dissipation and a day of amusement that really competes with the pleasures and amusements of the week, but a day that draws its delight from sources of a totally different kind—that gets its sanctity just from the fact that it draws the people entirely away from the pleasant path and leads them up the rugged and toilsome path into heavenly places. I think you will permit me to conclude with these beautiful words of Herbert on the Sabbath :—

> "Thou art a day of mirth,
> And when the week days trail upon the ground
> Thy flight is higher as thy birth.
> Let me take thee at a bound,
> Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
> Till that we both being cast from earth
> Fly hand in hand to Heaven."

Mr. A. T. Davies, of Liverpool, announced that the following had been elected as the new Committee of the National Council :—

Rev. C. F. Aked.
,, Dr. Thomas Allen.
,, Dr. Barrett.
,, F. W. Bourne.
,, R. J. Campbell, B.A.
,, Silas K. Hocking.
,, J. Hirst Hollowell.
,, Dr. Horton.
,, J. H. Jowett, M.A.
,, J. Scott Lidgett, M.A.
,, F. B. Meyer, B.A.
,, J. M. Gwynne Owen.
,, Dr. Guinness Rogers.
,, Dr. Townsend.
,, J. Travis.

Mrs. George Cadbury.
,, Caine.
,, Lenwood.
Mr. Robert Bird, J.P.
,, P. W. Bunting, M.A.
Alderman Duckworth, J.P.
Mr. W. P. Hartley, J.P.
Dr. Rendel Harris.
Mr. E. C. Rawlings.
,, J. Compton Rickett, M.P.
,, David Shepherd.
,, J. Bamford Slack, B.A.
Alderman Thomas Snape, J.P.
Mr. George White, M.P.
,, Robert Whyte.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Mr. George White, M.P. (Norwich) moved the following resolution :—

1. That the Council reaffirms its resolutions of last year on the subject of Secondary Education.
2. That the Council protests against the application of the local rates to the

establishment or maintenance of denominational schools privately managed, whether primary or secondary.

3. That the Council is of opinion that the only solution of the Education question is the creation of one local and directly representative authority, in areas of sufficient size, responsible for all grades of education; but in regard to the Secondary Education Bill, introduced by the Government during the last ordinary Session of Parliament, the Council is of opinion:—

> **That the constitution of the Education Committees of the County or Borough Councils should be defined by Parliament itself, and not left to the discretion of the Board of Education; that the appointment on such Committees of persons, 'male or female, who are not members of the Council' (I. 3), should be made compulsory and not optional, care being taken that such persons should be chosen on the ground of their educational qualifications; and that one-third of the Committee should be chosen by the School Board.**
>
> **It further insists that in the estimate of the provision of secondary education in any district, regard should be had, not merely to the efficiency of existing schools (IV. 2), but also to their suitability in respect of education, freedom from denominational restrictions, management, staff, premises, situation, fee, and in any other respect to the needs of the locality.**
>
> **It further urges that in the case of any school established, or managed, by the Secondary Education Committee, no religious tests should be imposed upon any persons connected with the school as teacher, scholar, or in any other capacity, and that no formularies distinctive of any religious denomination or denominations should be permitted to be used.**

4. The Council renews its demand for the establishment of universal School Boards in areas of sufficient magnitude.

5. The Council requests His Majesty's Government to introduce, or to support, legislation giving power to School Boards separately, or in association, to establish and maintain undenominational training colleges for elementary teachers.

6. In the interests of the efficiency of both elementary and secondary education, the Council is of opinion, that the establishment of higher elementary schools by the School Boards, with an educational curriculum suited to the requirements of each district, should be actively encouraged by His Majesty's Government and be assisted by adequate grants from the Imperial taxes.

It also protests against the restrictions as to the conditions of admission to, and the age of leaving, such schools imposed by the minute of April 6th, 1900, as contrary to the best interests of popular education.

Mr. White said that our system of secondary education made us the laughing-stock of the other civilised nations of the world. He emphasised the importance of a thoroughly graded system which would meet the requirements of a great variety of boys and girls. It must be a thoroughly graded system—elementary, secondary, technical—and to cover this complex arrangement, instead of drawing a sharp line between primary and secondary education, both sections must be connected under one authority in order to prevent overlapping. The State Church, however, stood in the way. It was a deplorable fact that the country was farther off from complete unsectarian education than thirty years ago, and the reaction had been greater under the present Government than in any previous period. He did not approve of the Nottingham scheme, which would refer the administration of education to the municipal authority. He opposed the proposal chiefly on the ground that education administered by the municipal body would be relegated to an inferior position in the work of the Council. Mr. White said that Free Churchmen should be on their guard against probable proposals of the Government. One of those would be to raise the technical rate from 2d. to 3d. Further, there would probably be a proposal to assist denominational schools from the rates. Then they must see that all the funds of the grammar schools were used for education, and that no money left for the poor was devoted to helping the rich. The teachers should be freed from all religious tests.

Mr. LEWIS WILLIAMS, J.P. (Cardiff), seconded the resolution. He said the minutes and codes issued with the sanction of the present Government would arrest educational progress and disfranchise the bulk of the children of the working classes of the country. There was little to hope from the Board of Education, which had been constituted, four-fifths from one party and five-sixths from one favoured sect. Such a constitution was an insult and an affront to the intelligence and loyalty of the Free Churches of this land. The speaker illustrated the hardship imposed upon children by recent limitations of higher grade schools. The great bulk of English and Scotch boys were forced to leave school at fifteen. Scotch boys and girls could go on until they were eighteen. Such limitations were as unpatriotic as they were unwise and unjust to the truest interests of the country. Were they to stand quietly and see this great system destroyed at the dictates of such a Board? He absolutely denied the truth of Sir John Gorst's allegation that the School Boards desired to control secondary education. The tripod system of control in the scheme now proposed would lead to greater rigidity and not to the greater elasticity which was desired. The only hope was that the people of this country would do what was done in 1896, that they would cry "Hands off" to the Government, and tell them that they would not have the privileges and rights of their children curtailed either by this or any other Government.

The Rev. JAMES PICKETT (Hull) moved as an amendment, "That all the clauses following the words 'grades of education' in Section 3 down to the words 'chosen by the School Board' at the end of Sub-section 1 be deleted." Mr. Pickett said that he in no sense dissented from the admirable speeches of the mover and seconder, but the sub-section he objected to distinctly contravened the declaration of the speakers. He pleaded that from this, the most representative body in the kingdom, there should go forth a clear and unmistakable pronouncement. Why they should support the hand ing over of this supreme question to bodies elected for other purposes, he thoroughly failed to understand. The County Councils were elected to look after drains, ditches, roads, and the disposition of mud, and not to deal with education, the most vital question of the Commonwealth. By his amendment the resolution would be simplified, and would present a clear-cut pronouncement without any qualification.

Mr. W. CROSFIELD, J.P. (Liverpool), seconded.

The Rev. J. HIRST HOLLOWELL expressed the opinion that the resolution would be strengthened by the changes recommended in the amendment. He desired, however, to speak on the general question, and he urged them to pass the resolution, in its original form or amended, with the determination to follow it up by practical action in the several localities. In the present crisis the Secondary Education Committee of the National Council should be a permanent vigilance committee to watch the course of affairs. The Act of 1897 was a crime. The minute proposing to turn out of school scholars over fifteen years of age the speaker described as infamous. There were only 7,000 to turn out. An American Government that proposed to turn out scholars over fifteen would be shot over Niagara and washed up on the British side. The Cockerton judgment, the speaker held, was against the law and the facts. It was an insult to the nation to try and confine the education of the English child to the three R's.

With a further slight alteration suggested by Dr. MONRO GIBSON the amendment was unanimously adopted.

The resolution as finally carried read thus:—

1. That the Council reaffirms its resolutions of last year on the subject of Secondary Education.

2. That the Council protests against the application of the local rates to the establishment or maintenance of denominational schools privately managed, whether primary or secondary.

3. That the Council is of opinion that the only solution of the Education question is the creation of one local and directly representative authority, in areas of sufficient size, responsible for all grades of education, but in regard to the Secondary Education Bill, introduced by the Government during the last ordinary Session of Parliament:—

> It insists that in the estimate of the provision of secondary education in any district, regard should be had, not merely to the efficiency of existing schools (IV. 2), but also to their suitability in respect of education, freedom from denominational restrictions, management, staff, premises, situation, fee, and in any other respect to the needs of the locality.
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> It further urges that in the case of any school established, or managed, by the Secondary Education Committee, no religious tests should be imposed upon any persons connected with the school, as teacher, scholar, or in any other capacity; and that no formularies distinctive of any religious denomination or denominations should be permitted to be used.

4. The Council renews its demand for the establishment of universal School Boards in areas of sufficient magnitude.

5. The Council requests His Majesty's Government to introduce, or to support, legislation giving power to School Boards separately, or in association, to establish and maintain undenominational training colleges for elementary teachers.

6. In the interests of the efficiency of both elementary and secondary educa-

tion, the Council is of opinion that the establishment of higher elementary schools by the School Boards, with an educational curriculum suited to the requirements of each district, should be actively encouraged by His Majesty's Government and be assisted by adequate grants from the Imperial taxes.

It also protests against the restrictions as to the conditions of admission to, and the age of leaving, such schools imposed by the minute of April 6th, 1900, as contrary to the best interests of popular education.

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT.

The PRESIDENT nominated as his successor in the chair of the Council for the year 1902-1903 the Rev. W. J. Townsend, D.D., of Prestatyn, North Wales. "I do not think," he said, "it is at all necessary that I should tell you his praises. It would be an insult to your intelligence to suppose that you do not know something of his character and his services. He is a man of real and wide culture. He has made many valuable contributions to religious literature. He is an ex-President of the Methodist New Connexion Conference. He has proved himself in very many ways, as teacher, preacher, and pastor, an able minister of Jesus Christ. He is a man with a big heart, and with a large share in the milk of human kindness."

The nomination was unanimously adopted.

RE-ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The Rev. J. BEVERIDGE, M.A., B.D. (Dundee), moved the re-election of the Rev. J. Monro Gibson, D.D., as honorary secretary of the Council, and Messrs. R. W. Perks, M.P., George Cadbury, and Evan Spicer, J.P., as treasurers.

The Rev. F. GALPIN, President of the United Methodist Free Churches, seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

INVITATION TO BRADFORD.

The Rev. GEORGE EAYRS (Bradford), in the name of his Council, invited the National Council to meet at Bradford next year. Mr. Eayrs promised the Council a right Yorkshire welcome. He said the invitation would be seconded by Mr. Byles, one of the proprietors of the *Bradford Observer*, a newspaper which had refused at all costs to publish betting odds.

Mr. A. R. BYLES seconded the invitation.

Dr. MONRO GIBSON moved that the invitation be accepted.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

It was also resolved that the next meetings of the National Council should be held on the 11th, 12th, and 13th days of March, but the Committee were empowered to alter the date if necessary.

VOTE OF THANKS.

The Rev. W. B. **Lark** moved a resolution heartily thanking the many friends of Cardiff, Penarth, Newport, Barry, and neighbourhood for the kind hospitality so freely given to the representatives attending the Council. Thanks were also accorded to the local committee and its officers, together with the secretaries of the various sub-committees, stewards, and organist. The resolution also tendered thanks to the Press for the full reports which had been given.

The Rev. R. **Veitch**, M.A. (Liverpool), seconded the resolution.

The Rev. **Thomas Law**, General Organising Secretary, supported the vote, saying that it had given him the greatest pleasure to work with his Cardiff friends, and especially with Mr. David Shepherd.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. **Shepherd** responded on behalf of the Cardiff Council. He paid a warm tribute to the work of the Rev. Thomas Law, with whom the local committee had worked in cordial co-operation. Mr. Shepherd asked the President to accept from the Cardiff Council the inkstand he had used during the sessions as a souvenir of the meetings.

The **President** was taken quite by surprise by the gift announced by Mr. Shepherd, and thanked his Cardiff friends for the token.

RECEPTION OF CONVERTED FRENCH PRIESTS.

The following ex-priests of the Roman Catholic Church in France now appeared on the platform :—Monsieur J. B. Corneloup, director of the work and home for priests, and editor of a monthly paper, *The Converted Priest ;* Monsieur Joseph Ver, pastor of the Reformed Church in France; Monsieur Vugier, engaged in the evangelisation of the deaf and dumb in Paris; Monsieur E. Morin and Monsieur A. Barascud, students of theology at Neuchatel, in Switzerland. They were accompanied by Professor Barbier, of the University College, Cardiff, who acted as interpreter. The Council stood up to receive the ex-priests.

The **President** expressed to the visitors the pleasure felt by the assembly in having the privilege to meet them, and offered to them the heartiest of welcomes. They would be received as representatives of a great people, with whom we had been in peace and friendship for nearly 90 years, and they all hoped that that peace would never be disturbed. "We have a great admiration," said the President, "for the French people, both for their intellectual gifts and their generous sympathies, and we remember that they have often been in the van of movements that have tended to the welfare of the human race. We do not forget that for a long time they were called, and deservedly, the most Christian nation, and we believe that the continued greatness and the welfare of France depend in a large measure upon the revival and reform of religion on the lines of the New Testament. We pray that God may bless the work in which you are engaged."

Mr. **PERCY** W. **BUNTING**, M.A., at the request of the President, explained the present position of the Roman Church in France. It was bound to the State by the terms of the Concordat and by the Budget of Public Worship—every curé in France was paid by the State—and on the other hand it was bound to Rome by the fetters of ancient allegiance and also by the same Concordat. It was believed by many that this Budget of Public Worship in France was doomed, and that the relation of the Church and State would have to go. There was also a considerable movement going on for throwing off the fetters of Rome, a movement headed by the Abbé Bourrier, an influential ex-priest, and if the French Church could get rid of the despotism of the Vatican and the Roman bishops, and remodel itself on more democratic lines, it would soon get rid of the Roman errors that now disfigured it. Some Protestant churches in France had opened refuges and offered assistance to priests who were prepared at once to adopt the Protestant faith pure and simple, and many of them who had renounced Roman Catholicism were taking up Protestant pastorates on evangelical principles.

The **PRESIDENT** at this point publicly thanked Professor Barbier for the service he was about to render the conference as interpreter.

Monsieur **CORNELOUP**, addressing the conference in English, said that he and his friends had escaped from the land of slavery, in which, like the children of Israel, they had been born, and had entered the promised country, the Canaan of the Gospel of Christ and salvation by Christ. They were not the only converted priests of France; they were merely the representatives of the mighty work of evangelisation that was now going on there, and which had already been the means of bringing 103 priests to the knowledge of the Lord. They longed to see their brethren whom they still loved come out of the fold of the Roman Church and receive the same spiritual joy, peace, and assurance that they had themselves experienced.

Monsieur A. **BARASCUD** explained how he came to secede from Rome. His first conviction was that the Pope was not infallible. When attending his lectures on theology it dawned upon him that there was something wrong with this dogma of infallibility, which it appeared to him was attributable to supreme pride and supreme lack of knowledge on the part of the Pope; supreme pride, because the Pope aspired to be put on the same level as Christ; supreme ignorance, because he ignored the errors of his predecessors. When he first uttered his doubts to his professor, he was treated as if he were a heretic. He had now come into the light, and was taking a course of study in order to be able to teach to others what he had himself experienced.

Monsieur **Joseph Ver**, who next spoke, proceeded to address the audience with such speed and eagerness that it was in vain Monsieur Barbier tried to follow him with an interpretation. At last, in response to cries from the audience of "Let him go," Professor Barbier sat down, and for five minutes Monsieur Ver addressed the audience in French. They could not, he said, realise how happy he felt to be a Christian. He seceded from Rome because Christianity taught them to worship God in spirit and truth, and he should remain an Evangelical Christian because its teaching was according to the tenets of the New Testament.

The **President** informed the visitors how delighted the Council had been to receive them, and in the name of the Council he extended to each of them the hand of Christian fellowship.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON.

The Council reassembled at 3 o'clock. After devotional services conducted by the Rev. J. Williamson, of Cardiff, the President announced that the business of the afternoon was Simultaneous Mission reports and experiences.

SIMULTANEOUS MISSION REPORTS.

I.—By Dr. Rendel Harris.

I apologise for Dr. Forsyth's absence and for my presence in his place. I can only assure you on his part that there was no want of sympathy that caused him not to be here to-day He has been working in the mission with us and doing splendidly.

Now this is a praise meeting. We are here to praise God and to say that 'God has visited His people.' We cannot perhaps take up the first part of the verse and say, 'A great prophet has been raised up, and God has visited His people.' We have not heard of any special manifestation of the prophetic gift in connection with the mission, and I am not particularly sorry on that account. The fact that God has visited His people is the greater statement of the two in the Scripture. The other is only a particular case in the general doctrine of the Divine visitation by means of which the Church is renewed, and by means of which the world is to be saved. And, indeed, if one were to ask whether we were particularly anxious that a great prophet should be raised up (I am not speaking disparagingly of the prophets), I should say we need a great intercessor more than a great prophet. The mission has its roots in the intercession of the saints and of the Saviour of the saints. Those who are expert in these matters, who know the ways of God with His Church, will tell us unhesitatingly that every successful revival of the work of God had its roots in the work of Divine Grace, which led the people of God into intercession for souls; and therefore there is more need of an intercessor. Then, if a great man is wanted at all, a great preacher will be found. Every successful mission shows a *rapprochement* between the two gifts, prophecy and intercession. Those who preach, preach as they never preached before, because they pray as they never prayed before. And those who are the Lord's remembrancers, and deal with Him in secret concerning the troubles of the times, are led to speak often and to enlarge their testimony. The intercessor, therefore, becomes frequently the prophet. The division of labour should not be carried so far that one man should say, 'I am a preacher,' and another should say, 'It is my business only to be an intercessor.' They go together.

In this mission, first of all, we all recognise that, to a large extent, we have been preaching to our own people and to the adherents of our own Churches; and that is no disparagement to the work of God that it should be so. We had to begin at Jerusalem, that in time we may get to Samaria. We hope to get there before 2001 if this work is going on naturally and simply, following the lines of the Divine leading, as the gracious work described in the Acts of the Apostles went on. We had to speak to our own people, and repair the ancient wastes. I would say it with reverence, there is nothing so provokes our reverence for the blessed Spirit of God as the power He has to create a soul under the ribs of death. We have been encouraged by the work of God in that it has prevented his people from losing the living sense of Christ's presence and His power to save. Numerous attempts have been made to galvanise into a better life, but the galvanising has failed, and all the artificial efforts. But by some such quiet impressive mission as this, where the advertisement was reduced to a minimum, where the preacher was oftentimes past apologising for, God was pleased by the greatness of His own power to make bare His arm for the salvation of the people, and the old wastes were repaired, and ancient desolations blossomed as the rose. In certain places—town or small villages—amongst weeping, wailing people (I only use figures in the general sense in which they are indulged in in the Acts of the Apostles), we have had in some thirty, in some sixty, in some a hundred-fold. But what has really happened? The creating of a new Church in that community, sometimes under the ribs of the old. But practically that work of God is described as the formation of a new Church with all the potentialities and all the responsibilities associated with the Day of Pentecost. Those who turned to God were gathered into communities for teaching and enlightening, that they might encourage one another to go on to perfection.

Now a word or two more about my own district. This is a meeting for reports. I doubt whether there has ever been such a Divine visitation in Cambridgeshire before. I have worked there since 1875. I have never seen anything that exactly compared with what I have seen this time. Here are some of the reports given in. I take them simply with a view of enabling us gathered together to glory in the Lord; it is not my work I am glorying in; I will not mention the names of the people or the places where the work has taken place. 'We had a united service on Sunday evening of a remarkable character. Mr. —— conducted the mission, which got hold of all sorts of persons, and the mission is increasing rather than otherwise.' That is a valuable testimony. Here is another: 'I preached at —— Sunday afternoon, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evening, and a Primitive Methodist local preacher took Thursday and Friday. Five persons decided for Christ. This is a great triumph.' 'At —— twenty-one persons gave themselves to the Lord.' There is another message which has come in: 'In the evening more young people decided for Christ. We are continuing the work, and have had thirty persons brought to the Lord.' I received another note this morning: 'In my own chapel we had some conversions before the mission and some since, in all thirty-three or even more.' In another place 'seventy decided for the Lord. Many young people were converted.' These are samples of the reports that are coming in. I have not mentioned particular numbers; they are taken at random. Continually there are cases, some thirty, some sixty, some hundred-fold.

One or two words more and I will sit down. We had to thank God for the extraordinary fellowship of the different Churches in this work. For the first time in Free Church history and almost in the history of United Mission work, we had with us friends from the Particular Baptist Church. If we did not always get all the help we expected from some other quarters, we found as the work went on the denominational differences died at the sight of the Cross by a natural death, and one can only hope that these Egyptians whom we see occasionally, we may see them again no more for ever.

I would suggest that while we may have to wait for another Simultaneous Mission, we could carry on the mission at once and make it continuous by grouping two or three adjacent counties and by selecting evangelists to co-operate with the local ministry. We had in Cambridgeshire six from the Faith Mission in Scotland; we had four helpers from the Free Trade Hall Mission in Manchester, and six from the Pentecostal League, all experts in the winning of souls for God, and in the keeping of them. This mission is an appeal to the Christ of the Twentieth Century, that we might know if His presence will go with us. His answer, as given in the missions is, 'Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the centuries.' And again, 'My Spirit remaineth among you; therefore fear ye not.'

II.—BY REV. JOHN MCNEILL.

I am sorry that you have called upon me, for according to the programme I am, to some extent, called upon to speak about myself. I would rather speak in general terms about mission work. And yet I fancy the interest in this great mission movement has been so great, and the large audience indicates the interest and desires a closer acquaintance with the facts to feed their faith, and to stimulate their zeal, and to bring glory to God. All the same I would like to be sufficiently impersonal and general. You asked me to take part in the London Mission. I enjoyed that work. I was put to the centre in the City Temple and Exeter Hall, and I had rather a hard time in the City Temple at week-nights. I don't know if Dr. Parker has tried the City Temple much for his great missions on week-nights. It is rather a wilderness, an emptiness; and when one remembers the suburbs from which one might expect the audience were held up against him by 250 of the best preachers in England, under such circumstances no man covets the City Temple as the centre. However there are people, especially in those great warehouses, and the Lord sent them in. We had thousands of people in our three meetings a day, and much blessing. I don't know why there was no organisation. I do not complain. The district is difficult, and there are no Churches with which you can associate to any extent. But there are people and they came, and the Word came with power.

You called me here to Cardiff. I mention Cardiff because there were extra features here. To ask that the missioner should stand in God's name on the Exchange in the middle of the day indicated, I think, some courage and Apostolic faith. But my beloved friend and brother, Mr. Shepherd, sticks at nothing, and the request was made. I think it was a signal proof that God was moving the pool, for the use of the Exchange was granted. I shall never forget the impressions coming back on my soul from the gatherings there. Let it not be at all generally stated as if it were a free general statement of the facts, that we did not reach in our missions the outsiders. The mission on the Cardiff Exchange would contradict any such verdict. If anywhere at all you want to meet an influential class of outsiders, outside the ordinary operations and husbandry of the ministry, get at the business men, for whom there should be meetings in large towns. You would get there non-church-goers, not of the homeless, ragged, tanned type, but many of them cultured—it may be, with the commercial traveller culture, but that is culture, that carries your commercial flag into the important centres of the world. They are brainy, keen men; but many of them are outside the Church. The wife, perhaps, goes to church, and the growing-up daughters follow the mother; but the sons growing up are apt throughout the Sabbath day to follow the father and to be non-church-goers. I ask you to try, if possible, especially in any town with a population of 150,000, to get a good-going business men's meeting, and you will strike at the heart of a potent and influential kind of non-church-going and capture it for Jesus Christ. I shall never forget the closing meeting at the Exchange. Mr. Shepherd got the hymns on the paper. There were many in that great audience; I will not say that they were immoral men, because we have plenty of people who are not church-goers who are moral, respectable, wealthy, and educated who are outside us. I suppose Welshmen somehow know all about 'Aberystwyth.' There must be a sort of telephone connection between here and there. Everybody seems to know those good old hymns. They must have heard them in earlier days. I remember our singing 'Jesu, lover of my soul.' I saw men's eyes kindling and their hearts were glowing, and far-back memories were being revived. You know that when you are singing 'Aberystwyth' we English and Scotch people go wrong on that high note. When we come to that we stop with a fatal hesitation. We seem to see that we are getting wrecked on those high C's (high seas). When you part with the reins, with a huge surrender, a thrill goes through you, and you seem to hear him say, 'I will carry you over the line if you will only let me.' I see that Welsh congregation now, and I shall not forget the gleam of their many eyes and the *cry*. Some poet speaks of the lyric cry in all true poetry. But I heard the cry of the heart. In that great clear note, 'Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing,' I felt as if that Exchange was some great *liner* in some tremendous hurricane out at sea. But out of the deafening clamour in the shrouds, that throbbing cry, 'Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing' was heard, and the great Pilot brought the waves beneath His feet, and the calm and salvation of His presence were felt. I saw men's eyes growing dim. I don't think anything that I have ever seen made such an impression on me as the impression made by every man on his fellow by the cry of the heart, and that glorious note and that glorious tune, 'Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing.' Well, I pass over that; to God be the glory.

Let me say I rejoice in this very day. I have been working for this just as before the Reformation people were at work. I believe no man need think that he waved his magic wand and the Federation appeared. Why, the united meetings held years back were just this federation in *embryo*, when in all large towns the Nonconformists of all names, with the Evangelistic men in the Church of England, were met for united Evangelistic work. One thing that made me leave Regent's Square was that I saw the opportunity of coming after Moody—a long way after, I know. In Scotland, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, London, and in other places, I have been privileged to meet Christian men, Nonconformists, and other people in great massive Evangelistic movements. I say that was a preparation. When it seemed, by the inspiration of God, the idea of this Federation was suggested, and they attempted to work it out, they found that the field was ready for organisation. I am delighted, too, that the Federation has realised its existence in Evangelistic work. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to see, during the last ten years, how differently Evangelistic work is being looked upon by the regular ministry. That to me is a great source of satisfaction. It was not always so. Not so long ago Evangelistic work and revival services were looked upon by some Christian people, and by some of our ministerial brethren, somewhat suspiciously. Some thought it did not need much intellectualness. Indeed, they seemed to think that it only needed the trick of being earnest. But this mission has taught people something in the other direction; and if you have attempted it, you have probably found, if you have failed, that your failure was on the side of the intellect. When I look through Spurgeon's sermons, I am amazed to see their constant intellectual wealth. He was always saying fresh things about the oldest and the most familiar themes. One of the most intellectual preachers in Scotland, well known for his theological work, said to me in his study, when he began in his evening service to be more directly Evangelistic, what a drain and strain his evening services were becoming to him on the intellectual side. I am delighted that the mission has brought out many preachers in this way. Gipsy Smith and myself are willing to decrease, that our intellectual, gifted, and cultured brethren may increase.

And now just a word for ourselves as preachers. Don't let us be afraid in our regular ministry to have a little more of this Evangelistic preaching. I would be sorry if we were to be too much identified with the counting of heads, in spite of what Gipsy Smith says, and I will tell you why. What I want to feel is that men will not stand away from this work because they cannot take second meetings. I have had them say to me, 'Oh, Mr. McNeill, I would like to take ten days' special services, but I have no gift to bring them out into the second meetings, and get them to give their addresses.' That is the fear that I have about this, that it may have the result of keeping these brethren away from the work. Just let them know that you are not going to test them in this way; that you are going to walk by faith, and not by sight. What I would like to insist on is that, alongside of this, you must look more for developed workers. I have a letter from a young fellow who was in a mission. He was careless and unconcerned, but he was cultured and educated, and had not broken loose into immorality. He came and heard a missioner. After an appeal was made, he went into an after-meeting. After he had said that he was in the dark, and wanted to understand things, he was simply told to read his Bible and to pray, and all would come right; and then he was asked: 'What is your name and address?' That is not against the missioner, but against the workers. It is no use our preaching to the people that they have only to accept and to look to Jesus to be saved by simple and absolute surrender just as they are, and to come immediately to Him in faith; that God so loves Jesus for what He is, and for what He has done for us, that, if we only trust Jesus, faith will be counted for righteousness; it is no use our preaching that, if you preach salvation by works in the inquiry-room, the works of reading and praying. You are going back to your old friend Ritual and Rome. That is not salvation by faith. If this work is to be carried on, and it is, that side of the work must be more effective. You will need to train and develop experts and specialists to deal with souls. That man at that time knew that nothing had come to him, and he began to think that he was a hypocrite, and that all were hypocrites, for he had gone through the most approved form of getting saved, and it had cost him something to go into that after-meeting, and his name and address had been taken, and yet as he writes, 'I knew nothing had come to me.' Let us train our specialists for this important part of the work, your weightiest, your holiest, and your most intellectual people. And these are not the classes that do most work in the after-meeting. It is often those to whom you give the most of your brain and soul, and your expository gifts of preaching, who do the least in return for what they get. The after-meeting is often left to warm-hearted working-class folk, who can deal with their own class, but when certain kinds of people come in they do not know what to do with them.

I would just say further that I trust Evangelistic preaching will lift us out of the trammels and ruts and methods we are all apt to fall into. I don't know anything that will help us to get up an Evangelistic edge in our ministry more than to get out of the mud and the ruts. We are too much alike in the matter of preaching. It will be well for us to have more individuality, and I trust every time we go into the pulpit we shall try more and more to be unlimbered. Don't be afraid of saying all that is in you, and don't be afraid of using pathos and tenderness; but avoid thinking that pathos is a trick of the voice, and tenderness the putting of tears into your eyes. It is not that any more than reverence consists in turning your eyes to the roof extra often.

Don't be afraid of making people smile. I know people who come just because of the smile, and if God is willing to bait your hook with that, let Him. If the fish will rise to that, let them. I was interested to see yesterday how the smile broke out in that marvellous address when Mr. Jowett was speaking and asking us to *woo* men, to be at a Christ-like best by wooing; and he flung us back on experiences on the human side of wooing. It was then that the smile broke over your faces. And I don't think the Spirit left either the preacher or the hearer. I know a certain man, a preacher, and you know him as well, who is a sinner in this respect. Again and again he had touched that chord, and when the audience had broken up and were going out he was compelled to overhear them. Said one minister to another, 'Donald, what did you think of him?' 'Oh,' said Donald the reverend, 'what did you think of him?' 'I don't know.' 'All I can say is that I never can be funny in the pulpit.' And quick as lightning came the reply, 'No, Donald, nor anywhere else.' Don't let us make a virtue of necessity. Another thing: to a large extent it is as if we are all playing a piano, and as if the universal way of playing was to thrum one or two keys with one hand. But suddenly there comes along a man who attacks it with both hands, and sweeps the whole keyboard; and when he has done someone tells him that he is eccentric, and that is not the right way to play it. Don't be afraid to sweep the whole of our wonderful keyboard. I often think (and I get inspiration from it) of David and Goliath. The best style is that which reached Goliath. If it reaches his head that is the best style. If it does not bring him down it is a very poor style. We may be only a mere sling and a stone, and that may not look so dignified and wonderful. It may not look so beautiful as the thrust and the parry of the sword. But let no man think a sling and a stone is easy. I will venture to say, if you have not tried it, that if you do try it there will be no safety anywhere behind you. Don't be afraid to sling and to fling your stone often then, not because you think that you are expert, not that you are a great slinger; but sling it, fling it, in the name of the Lord, and He will see that your stone does not fall useless to the ground.

III.—By Gipsy Smith.

I can say a good deal about the mission. It is not over yet. I have been working along these lines for twenty-four years. I began preparing for this mission when in the tent life Jesus saved me, and I have been preparing for it ever since. With me it is not by fits and starts: you don't save souls that way. It is not by spasmodic efforts that this world is to be won for Jesus Christ; it is by a life's work. I am glad the Churches are waking up to the importance of 'first things first.' We exist to save; that is our first business, to convert, to make disciples, to Christianise, to open the blind eyes, to unstop the deaf ears; and may the day be far distant when we can even hope to live without seeing that accomplished. You placed me in this great mission at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, and I went with a great deal of fear and trembling. But my friend Mr. Everet, the local Secretary, and the Pastor with him, had made such magnificent preparations that when I reached the spot I felt that it was all right. And while I trembled in myself, as I do now, my confidence in God was very great. Some of you have heard and read about that great mission, and it is on yet. My dear friend, Mr. Thomas Spurgeon, was by my side in every service save one. He says, 'We are still gathering up the fragments: we are on the look-out for the winged and wounded birds, and we are finding them.' We had over 1,200 people saved. You count Goliath when he fell. I brought down 1,200 with my sling and stone. Don't you call common or unclean what God hath cleansed.

And then you sent me to Birmingham with Dr. Clifford. A better colleague no missioner ever had. I was reminded of a story I heard in America when I was there last. They do tell some wonderful *stories*, and some of them can be re-*lied* upon. They tell a story of a coloured man going to preach to his people. He said: 'In the first place, I shall splanify. In the second place, I shall argefy. In the third place, I shall come to the rousification.' Dr. Clifford, in the afternoon, did the splanification and the argefication, and at night I worked up the rousifications, and I rejoice to have been allowed that part of the work. It is not everybody can do that. What is the use of a sermon lacking application? What is the good of a peroration if you have no focus? What is the use of a brilliant oration, if you have no pointing, no saying: 'Thou art the man'? The sinner does not admire your Master, but he admires you. We must be direct if we are going to convert. It is no use talking about sin. We must talk to the sinner in the seat before us and make him feel—not pleasant with us, but in an agony with God because of his sin. That is our business, and God help us to do it! At Birmingham 1,500 people passed through the inquiry room, and the work is going on. I could talk about the mission an hour. It is important that the Churches have been aroused, and I hope they will not go to sleep again. And you, ministers, please don't you go to sleep. If you keep awake, your people will; for what the man in the pulpit is, the man in the pew is. I have had a church for four years when I was only a boy of twenty-two, and I was put before 2,500 to preach to them every Sunday for four years, and I know what it means. I have never had a week without conversions. I have a pastor (Mr. Collier) who has been in his church fifteen years, and never has a week gone by without conversions. That is what I called hand-picked fruit, and it will fetch the best price in the market. That is the ideal Church, 'adding daily such as shall be saved.' If we rise to the occasion, we may use it. Now you have been aroused, the Churches must henceforth act together, and look after the thousands of new converts given to you. Don't put your nursing out. God has given you babes; I hope you have cradles, clothes, and food for them. It is the business of the pastor to see at least once a month for six months those who have lately joined his church, and to talk to every new convert who has joined the church. Say to one of the best people in the church: 'Take charge of this convert for six months, and report to me once a fortnight.' The late Dr. Berry did that with forty converted in a mission in Wolverhampton. Dr. Clifford is doing that with some handed to him from the Simultaneous Mission. It will do your people good to have something to do. They are starved, not for the want of food but for the want of an appetite. Nothing creates spiritual appetite like work for Christ Jesus. Give the new converts something to do. Nothing keeps a man in the Church better than giving him something to do. Try it. Don't be heard to say, 'Well, these are not my converts.' Barnabas did not say that. When he was sent down to the little place where they had got a few blessed, he did not know who they were converted under. 'He saw the grace of God and was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.' He began to teach them and to train them.

Some people bring into the Church and others bring up. The latter is the more important. Take care of the new converts. Become nursing mothers. Don't say, 'I don't know much about the business, but I hope it will stand.' I should not stand long near you. I should get away from you as far as I could lest I should lose the little bit of religion that I had found. The converts get enough coldness, enough hindrance, enough blighting influence from outside, and they want something warmer, kinder, more genial, more Christ-like in the Church. Take care of them. They won't be perfect in five months, in a year. You are not perfect yet, and you have been at it a long time. I know they will fall, and did not you? I often blunder and stumble, and nobody is more conscious of it than I am, and that makes me more sympathetic with the man who falls by my side. If he stumble, help him up again. If he goes astray go after him; and if you miss him from the Sunday service, let him feel the grip of a strong hand, and it will be an inspiration to him and brace him, and he will be able to walk some day. I am the father of two boys. When the first was born I wanted him to walk when he was six months old. (I was a very young father.) Long before he walked I took him away from his mother and stood him up, and he would stand. I excited him and he clapped his hands. I pulled away the chair and I said 'Come on,' and he went down. Did I call the missis, and say, 'This child is always falling, and he will never walk; I am sure he never will'? I jumped round and picked him up, and kissed him for falling. He walks now—I know it by the shoe-leather he wears out. Have a little patience with the tens of thousands that have been brought in the missions and in the churches, for they will walk too some day.

You don't know what you have got in these young people. There may be amongst them a President of the Free Church Council. Don't despise even the boys. Don't despise even the man that looks most hopeless. You don't know what is in him. You only see the surface. The great Master looks beyond. It takes an artist to see a picture in the canvas or on it before the brush is on it, or to see the angel in the block of marble before the mallet or the chisel has touched it. Who saw in the man, the publican, who sat at the receipt of custom at the toll-booth the man who wrote the first Gospel? Who was it saw that little fellow in the tree? The people said that Zacheus was a sinner; but He said, 'He is the son of Abraham.' The little world looked at a drunken, swearing tinker. God looked and said, 'John Bunyan.' The little world looked upon that swearing sailor, and that is all the world saw. He looked and said, 'John Newton.' A little while ago the world looked at a boot-seller in a shoe-store. He looked and He said, 'D. L. Moody,' who put his hands on two continents and they have pulsated for God. The little world looked upon a young collier fond of frolic. God looked at him and said, 'Peter Mackenzie.' A little while ago the world and the Churches, too, looked at an old gipsy's tent, and that is all they saw, save the father and five motherless children. No man cared for them; they were outsiders. You never sent a missionary to them. Nobody saw what was going on there, but God did. He looked through the old smoky canvas upon the poor father and the five little children, and He said, 'There are five preachers there,' and he put his hands around the six and he saved them, and I am one of them. You don't know what you may have in the young converts if you only nurse them. Don't believe the mission is over; it is only begun. Do you want the soul fresh for the task? Let me tell you how I keep mine fresh. In my home in Manchester, where I sleep occasionally—in my bedroom—are two photographic pictures, which are the dearest pieces of furniture in the house. One is the picture of an old gipsy waggon in which my mother died, and the other is that of a gipsy tent with a group of nomads. When I am dressing there I go and stand before them, and I look at them, and I say to myself, 'Rodney, that iswhere you were, and you would have been there to-day but for the Cross. How can you, with the memory of that Cross, lose the passion for souls?'

As in previous years, Communion Service was held at the close of the last session. Visitors joined the representatives in partaking of the Sacrament.

Previous to the Communion of the Lord's Supper, the following

ADDRESS

BY THE REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, B.A.,

was delivered:

It is fitting that we should offer thanks to God in this Eucharist service, for the great spiritual blessing we have received in our meeting together this week. And it is fitting also that we should try to realise, in some measure, the importance of the service in which we are now engaged, the service which has been for ages the central act of the worship of the Christian Church. We have before us here the memorials of the passion of the Deity, that greatest of all the mysteries that Christianity has declared to the world. We have here, likewise, the reminder of our fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ. In gathering around the Lord's Table, we are saying to one another that we have discerned it to be impossible for spiritual life to be lived alone. We are mutually dependent on our spiritual sympathy as the condition of our individual spiritual growth. It is impossible for us to be what God would have us to be, and to please him, except we are sharers of divine grace. Those who have ceased to be sharers have ceased to be possessors of the divine grace.

Furthermore, we are here to deepen our individual consciousness of God. I take it there is no opportunity so sacred as the present for such a purpose as that. This is the service where the message of God is delivered less by the prophet than immediately by the brooding Spirit in silence, as we partake of this memorial of the broken body and the shed blood of the Saviour, assuring us that we are met with God, and speak with God, and God speaketh to us as a man speaketh unto his friend. Our Saviour is really present, not in the memorials which are the symbols of the divine realities, but in the hearts of all believers. Through him our individual consciousness of God is deepened by the thought that not even a prophet can come between our Father and our soul.

When we speak of the consciousness of God, dear brethren, we have touched upon what is, I think, the greatest need of every man and woman in this place to-day. There are moments of deep need in the experience of everyone of us, when we retain but a dim consciousness of God. But when we are together sharing in this means of grace, we feel as though we could not be perturbed again, that we shall be never daunted again in our service of the Most High, never again distrustful, never again faint-hearted. We know that we have come from times, and returned to times, when we have not retained the same consciousness of God. Our greatest need is an abiding consciousness of God, one that will never, never leave us, or forsake us, no matter what the adventures and the desires of the lives may be. Let us then claim in the silence and solemnity of this service a deeper, a more solemn consciousness of God. Such is the consciousness of God that we want, dear brethren, that it can give no account of itself. That is worthy of note. We know not why we want God in the last result. We cannot analyse what we receive from God. Many men are conscious in the world to-day of a craving for God which they cannot understand, except it be as Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for this." Questions of right and wrong do not enter into the deepest experience of God, though they presume it. What we are and owe to God because of what God has done for us, not that for a moment draws us nearest to God. Spiritual life is life lived with a person. We do not analyse what is due from us to God, and what God has already given from Himself to us. Spiritual life, therefore, transcends all moral sanctions, even while it includes them; for our consciousness of God is the consciousness of a living divine presence in our hearts.

And beyond this, again, our consciousness of God partakes of other elements that are communicable through spiritual sympathy from life to life, but which are most especially our own. God is equally near to the sinner as to the saint; but the sinner has not the same consciousness of the fact. Origen beautifully stated the thought: "Christ sleeps in the heart of every man as he slept in the boat on the Lake of Galilee, and he is wakened at the cry of human need to still the storm of passion in our lives." Let us think of it (as individually we have a claim upon Him from His own promise to us), He is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, nearer than the nearest. Our consciousness of God is our response to an existing divine fact. We would not seek Him but that we have already found Him.

How, dear brethren, shall we deepen our consciousness of God? In the first place (I say it very reverently), by doing nothing at all. Amongst the many blessings we have received this week, surely the spiritual fervour generated amongst us has been the greatest. In Mr. Jowett's address, which I did not hear, but of which some have spoken to me, and in Dr. Horton's address this morning, we were brought near to the unseen, and something was added to our consciousness of God. But our first impulse after hearing either of these messengers of the King, was it to go out and do something for Christ's sake? I trow not. Our first desire was to be filled with His Blessed Spirit, to gain a deeper knowledge of Himself, and to be still in His presence. I do no more than echo the thoughts of your hearts when I say the first essential of a deeper consciousness of God is to be still in the presence of that Divine Life which we know to be already ours. Let men do less, let God do more. The human part is infinitesimal. The part of God is greater than the greatest faith can conceive. Let us think of God doing his work in the soul, and place ourselves before the altar, and wait the fire. The first essential to realise a consciousness of God is to be still.

In the next place, dear brethren, to have a consciousness of God let us render ourselves spiritually susceptible. I state the same point as before in another way. To be spiritually susceptible, let us learn to read God everywhere, to take a sacramental view of life. Every holy man has a sacramental function. Everything in life to the tutored eye expresses God. Nowhere is He not. Let us learn to be so spiritually susceptible that all that is in life, even the beauty that lies beneath the sordid and the ugly, may speak of God. My dear and honoured friend, Dr. Horton, in his address this morning stated things with which I am in deepest accord. But I think that he would be most ready to admit that he did not give us all the truth. He said that we needed no aids to worship; he spoke of stripping ourselves of all unnecessary accessories and of letting the heart speak to its Maker without any intermediary. But, brethren, there is another side to that truth. While it is true the Christian life is a VIA DOLOROSA, it is also a way of joy. While Christian life is self-crucifixion, it is also a path of faith, and God meets us in every article and event of our lives, if we had but eyes to see. Nowhere is He not. He is spiritually perceptible; and let us learn to read Him in the instincts of the soul. Oh, for the power to apprehend Him in such a moment as the present—not by what we do so much as by what we are, by what we wish, by what we say, by our susceptible hearts being under the brooding Spirit of the Most High.

Lastly, brethren, let us, for a deeper consciousness of God, learn to discover Him in our own loneliness. Deeply as we have been stirred this week by one another's society and by what we have shared of God, there has been a part of the territory of everyone of us which has not been touched by the experience of the rest. You have God lonely somewhere, and why? That each one of us might be the possessor of a part of the life of God in which he shares with none. Our Master in the upper room declared, not sadly, but exultantly, "I am not alone, the Father is with Me." Was that a cry of anguish, disappointment, despair? It was an affirmation of peace. We come most really near to God when we realise we are so much alone. Never are we less alone than when we are most alone, for in our deepest, most solemn moments, we have, and can have, no companion but God. But what God? When I say Father I think of Jesus; when I breathe a prayer to the King of Kings I am thinking of Him who went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead. It is His life in which I am most alone. If I find myself I find Him in the altar, in the secret place of Christ. Because Christ is present, blessed are we in our consciousness of God.

Now, dear brethren, I bid you as you draw around the Table of the Lord seek such a consciousness of God. We who are ministers of religion can do no more to lead a soul to Christ but to lead him to the threshold of the House of God and then stand back. We share with our fellow Christians the joy which comes from having

Christ. But we have a greater joy still—the one we have for ourselves alone, the joy of God speaking in the secret place of our own heart. When I am silent and all is still in this place, that speech will go on, and we shall be learning of the Master from what the Master says. God will give to us that consciousness of Himself which will sustain us in the days of conflict yet to come, if by the memory of this our vision we have met with Jesus. In one of Fenèlon's beautiful prayers he says, "Live, O our Father, our Saviour, since Thou art really so, within our hearts where we never looked for Thee. Sometimes Thou art to us as a hidden God. O Father, we open the door of the heart that Thou mayest have free ingress to our souls, and dwell there in company with us for evermore." Such is the consciousness of God that we would seek. Let us put the altar in the right place. The presence of Christ is not at that table, not in those sacred symbols of His broken body and shed blood; but there is the presence of Christ in your heart and in mine, that real presence of Christ for which the world is craving and in the consciousness of which there is peace for evermore. Amen.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

In connection with the visit of the Council to Cardiff, various public meetings were held in the town and in the neighbouring towns. They were in all cases well attended, and very enthusiastic.

It should first of all be noted, however, that on Tuesday evening, when Dr. Parker preached the Annual Council sermon in the Park Hall, thousands of persons could not obtain admission, and an overflow service was conducted by the Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., in the Andrews Hall.

On Wednesday evening there was a Young People's Demonstration in the Park Hall. The building was crowded. Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., presided, and the other speakers were Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., B.D., the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, and the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan.

A mass meeting was held in the same building on Thursday evening. In the absence, through illness, of Mr. W. P. Hartley, J.P., the chair was taken by Alderman Howell Davies, J.P., ex-Mayor of Bristol. Addresses were also given by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., the Rev. John McNeill, and Gipsy Smith. Mrs. Evens sang a solo. There was an overflow meeting at the Andrews Hall.

Public meetings were also held at Penarth, Newport, Pontypridd, Barry, Merthyr, and the Rhondda Valley. Those who took part in these gatherings included : Revs. W. Glover, Dr. Brook, J. C. Honey, Dr. Glover, Dr. Monro Gibson, W. Lewis, W. Thomas, George Eayrs, F.R.H.S., James Baillie, S. R. Jenkins, J. M. Gwynne Owen, W. K. Burford, W. B. Lark, Silas K. Hocking, Dr. Leach, S. B. Lane, J. Hirst Hollowell, Frank Ballard, M.A., B.Sc., H. J. Taylor, and Messrs. W. Crosfield, J.P., George White, M.P., Alderman Duckworth, J.P., Mr. Albert Spicer, and others.

SIXTH NATIONAL COUNCIL

OF THE

EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES,

CARDIFF, 1901.

FEDERATION REPORT

PRESENTED BY

REV. THOMAS LAW,

General Organising Secretary.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN presenting this, the Seventh Annual Report of Federation work, we again feel that our first words must be expressive of devout thankfulness to the great Head of the Church for His abundant blessing during the year. The past year has undoubtedly been by far the most important and fruitful in our history. The most far-seeing and sanguine of the leaders of the movement in its earliest stages would not have ventured to predict that, within so short a period of time, the National Council and the associated Councils would have made so altogether unparalleled an effort in the evangelising of England as has been seen in the Simultaneous Mission.

It is truly marvellous that while the Councils made their arrangements for the Mission as thorough as organisation could make them, they yet found time for a great variety of other important work. A perusal of what follows in this report will make it abundantly clear that the work of the Councils, in addition to the Mission, has been more than sufficient to justify the movement. We have received full and interesting reports from every corner of the country. It is plain that the Councils are almost without exception doing more work and better work than ever. They are taking up, in the most thorough manner, schemes which demand the greatest amount of persistent, quiet, organised labour. One illustration of this is that the number of Councils which are working the Free Church Parochial system shows a great increase during the year. No part of the Councils' work is more difficult and at the same time more fruitful.

All the reports of work which have reached the Central Office have been carefully examined, and all of them will be used in a variety of ways to promote the interests of our common cause. This report could not have been compiled without the whole-hearted assistance of the Secretaries of local Councils and Federations throughout the country. They have kept us continually in touch with their work, and supplied a great mass of valuable material. The length of the report grows year by year, and necessarily so. There is every year more and more to record, and greater variety of service to be taken account of. The notes of Councils' work that follow are to be taken merely as typical, and not by any means as inclusive of all the efforts of the Councils.

It is, perhaps, needless now to assert that the movement has been from the beginning first of all and pre-eminently spiritual. No one who has even the slightest acquaintance with the work of local Councils is able to entertain any other idea. But if any doubt existed at all, the Simultaneous Mission has effectively and for ever dispelled it. This was a movement into which, of course, not the slightest shadow of a shade of party politics could enter, and in which men of a variety of political opinions took an active and enthusiastic part. The fear that the Councils would meddle with party politics and that the movement would, in consequence, be wrecked has, we believe, entirely passed away. It is now seldom expressed at all. During the past year we have had the General Election, and party feeling has in many quarters run high. But we quite confidently assert that never for a moment has the movement been in peril, and that not a single local Council has been even temporarily paralysed by the gravest differences in political opinion.

The map has again been brought up to date, and it will be seen that local Councils continue to be formed in all parts of England and Wales. We hope, as soon as possible, to prepare a special coloured map which will show the limits of the Councils, and the areas which the Federations cover.

Owing to the fact that the Simultaneous Mission in provincial towns has only just closed, and that the Village Mission, at the time of going to press, has not begun, it has been impossible to make the report of this national and unique effort as complete as it ought to have been. We are deeply grateful to all who have given help.

OUR PROGRESS.

During the past year eighty-seven new Councils have been formed. This is a striking advance even on the excellent record of last year, for at Sheffield the formation of forty-four Councils was reported. The number of Councils throughout the country is now about 700. The increase, taking place all over the country, represents a general movement. Very soon we shall have to report that no more Councils are being formed, for the simple reason that in a comparatively short space of time the whole of England and Wales will be covered with Councils.

The following are Councils which have been formed during the year, as far as can be definitely ascertained. They are placed in the order of counties :—

NEW COUNCILS.

Cambridgeshire—Chatteris.
Cheshire—Wilmslow.
Cumberland—Penrith, Nenthead.
Derbyshire—Chesterfield, Staveley.
Devonshire—Brixham, Crediton, Paignton, Calstock.
Dorsetshire—Poole, Portland.
Durham—Willington, Sacriston, Wingate, Lumley.
Gloucestershire—Wrington Valley, Frampton, Coleford.
Hampshire—Fareham, Christchurch and Ringwood.
Herefordshire—Ledbury, Newent and Gorsley.
Kent—Northfleet and Greenhithe, Broadstairs.
Lancashire—Tyldesley, Stretford, Urmston and District, Brierfield, Eccles, Leigh, Dalton, Milltom and District.
Leicestershire—Barton Fabis, West Leicestershire.
Lincolnshire—Scotter, Spalding.
London—Hounslow, Twickenham, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross and Waltham Abbey.
Monmouth—Chepstow, Brynmawr, Cross Keys, Tredegar, Abergavenny.
Norfolk—Downham Market.
Northumberland—Haydon Bridge.
Nottinghamshire—Whitwell.
Oxfordshire—Henley-on-Thames, Bicester.
Shropshire—Market Drayton.
Somerset—Cheddar Valley, Chew Magna, Clevedon.
Surrey—West Surrey.
Sussex—Bexhill-on-Sea.
Wales (North)—Rhuddlan, Caergwrle, Portdinorwic, Connah's Quay, Colwyn Bay, (Welsh) Mostyn.

Wales (South)—Presteigne, Rhondda Valleys, Builth, Llandrindod Wells, Carmarthen, Dowlais, Haverfordwest.
Wiltshire—Marlborough.
Yorkshire (East Riding)—South Holderness.
Yorkshire (West Riding)—Castleford, Pudsey, Nidd Valley, West Melton, Yeadon, Drighlington, Wath, Snaith, Hebden Bridge, Horsforth, Heckmondwike, Garforth.
Yorkshire (North Riding)—Bedale, South Bank.

Africa—Port Elizabeth.
Australia—Queensland, Adelaide.
Germany—Berlin.
New Zealand—Auckland.

NEW FEDERATIONS.

Eastern Division of South Wales and Monmouthshire (Cardiff)
North East Lancs.
Western Division of South Wales (Swansea).

DISTRICT FEDERATIONS.

Last year we reported that there were thirty-three Federations, now there are thirty-six. The new Federations are North-east Lancashire, the Western Division of South Wales, and the Eastern Division of South Wales and Monmouthshire. It is hoped shortly to form another Federation with Preston as the centre, which shall include such towns as Blackpool, Fleetwood, Lytham, etc. That will complete the network of Federations for the important county of Lancashire. We are confident that the two Federations for South Wales will accomplish as good work as the North Wales Federation, which is so magnificently served by the Rev. D. Oliver as Secretary. District Federations now cover practically the whole of the country, and, as indicated in last year's report, it is intended to bring out, as soon as possible, a coloured map showing their respective areas, and the areas of the Councils they include. Never was the usefulness of the Federations so abundantly manifested as during the past year. They have been of the greatest service in helping towns, and particularly the villages of their districts, in their preparations for the Simultaneous Mission, and, above all, in appointing missioners. It was obviously impossible for the Central Office to enter into direct communication with every small town, village and hamlet that was preparing for a mission, and the value of the Federations as a connecting link between the National Council and the local Councils has been clearly shown. The local Secretaries are in close intercourse with the Federation Secretaries, and both are in close and constant contact with the Central Office at the Memorial Hall. The organisation of the movement has attained, by the hearty co-operation of all parties, to a completeness that leaves almost nothing to be desired. The links of the chain are all strongly forged. As time goes on, more and more important duties and responsibilities will devolve upon the Federations, and it is already fully evident that they will be thoroughly able to discharge them. The following brief reports give some indication of the work undertaken by the Federations. Of course it is impossible to give more than the barest outline:—

Bedfordshire.

This is the smallest Federation in the country, but it has done a considerable amount of work, especially in educational matters. The centre of the Federation, Bedford, is fortunate in possessing a minister of such commanding influence as Dr. John Brown. Dr. Brown is, heart and soul, in the Federation Movement. His masterly address at the Liverpool meetings, in which he demolished the Anglican and Roman doctrine of Apostolic Succession, will not soon be forgotten by those who had the privilege to hear it. House-to-house visitation has been carried out in Bedford with satisfactory results to the churches. In course of time, no doubt, the Federation will cover the whole county.

Berks, South Oxon, and South Bucks.

Beyond the routine work of keeping the existing Councils in helpful touch with one another, the chief business of the year has been to extend, as widely as possible, the benefits of the Simultaneous Mission scheme, and where feasible make this the starting point for permanent Council work. A number of meetings have been held in outlying places in the interests of Federation. At Henley a new Council is being formed. Reading Council has received ten fresh village churches into affiliation, and there is evidence that the principles of the movement are steadily gaining ground. Successful meetings were held at Oxford in November, when the speakers were the Rev. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, Mr. Percy Bunting, the Rev. Thomas Law, and Professor Massie. The Councils included in the Federation are Reading, Oxford, Newbury, Maidenhead, Marlow, Abingdon, High Wycombe. No Federation is more splendidly officered. Professor Massie is President; Principal Fairbairn, Mr. J. W. Walker, J.P., Mr. Owen Ridley, J.P., and Mr. J. H. Thomson, are Vice-Presidents; Mr. Thomas Waite is Treasurer, and the Rev. William Armstrong, M.A., is Secretary.

Bradford and District.

The work of this Federation has undoubtedly taken root, and is likely to be of signal service in advancing the interests of the Free Churches, and of the Free Church Councils in this part of Yorkshire. Two largely attended and enthusiastic meetings have been held during the year, viz., at Halifax and Bradford. The Rev.

H. Varley, B.A., the first President of the Federation, has rendered splendid service to the cause; visited most of the Councils, and delivered an Address on "Nonconformity: its basis, and its aims," which was felt to be so timely that the Committee have decided to publish it in pamphlet form for general circulation. The Rev. H. Davis, owing to his removal from Halifax to Kettering, was obliged to resign the position he so worthily filled as Federation Secretary. The Rev. G. S. Smith, of Sowerby Bridge, who was unanimously appointed his successor, is working with great zeal and energy. Free Church Religious Services have for some time past been conducted at Menston Asylum by various ministers, and others, and with so much success, that the Federation have just appointed the Rev. T. Hamer, of Ilkley, to take sole charge of the Services, and the work of visitation at the institution. The Asylums Committee of the County Council have sanctioned the appointment, and express their hearty approval of the arrangement. The Councils in the Federation are guaranteeing an "Honorarium," as an acknowledgment of their Representative's services. A large amount of earnest thought and prayerful attention has been given to the Simultaneous Mission, and it is believed that, with the Divine blessing, the arrangements made by the Federated Councils resulted in a large extension of the Kingdom of Christ.

Bristol and District.

Since March, 1900, two half-yearly meetings have been held. One, the Annual Meeting in June, at Weston-Super-Mare, was addressed by the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., and the General Organising Secretary. By extensive correspondence and frequent visitation the impression upon the mind of the Secretary (the Rev. F. Broughton Knight) is being deepened that the Free Church Council movement is increasing in public favour, more especially in the rural districts. The Simultaneous Mission, by showing the advantages of a standing Nonconformist organisation available at every emergency, has contributed greatly to this result. The Federation is very extensive in its area and varied in its constituency, stretching from Exmoor to the Cotswolds. Recently the Secretary has succeeded in forming three new Councils, that of the Wrington Villages, the Clevedon Villages, and the Chew-Magna Villages. Two others are in process of formation. At many of the Conferences there has been an earnestness of purpose and unity of effort, surpassing Mr. Knight's most sanguine expectations. The only district now untouched is in the north-west corner of Somerset, the centre of which is Watchett. The Secretary is making a map of the whole district, upon which every new Council is added; also the several villages around for which they severally care. It is gratifying to see how by degrees the map is being covered with names.

All the seventeen Councils of the Federation engaged heartily in the Mission. In one district there were fourteen missioners, in another eight. In more than one Council the missioners were wholly local, in others altogether imported. The Secretary kept a list of helpers to whom Secretaries might apply. Some of the missioners were ladies, and the Federation is indebted to the agents of the Bristol City Mission for their help.

Cambridge.

This Federation has the distinction of having as its President Dr. Rendel Harris, of Clare College. Dr. Harris has been particularly active in his work for the movement. Dr. Forsyth, the Rev. J. W. Campbell, and Rev. Charles Joseph are the Vice-Presidents, Mr. R. J. Moffat is Treasurer, and the Rev. J. W. Upton and Mr. J. C. Isard are the Secretaries. The Federation includes Cambridge, Ely, Royston, March, Linton, Wisbech, and Newmarket. A Summer Festival was held at Cambridge, comprising Free Churchmen's Conference, sermon by Rev. J. W. Ewing, public meeting addressed by Rev. J. Tolefree Parr and others, business meetings, luncheon and tea. The relation of temperance to Parliamentary representation has been watched. But the chief matter has been preparation for the 1901 Mission; first, by general exhortations and discussions, then by details of appointments and interchanges, in which Dr. Rendel Harris, as President, has been particularly active, and the Councils have received great assistance by correspondence and conferences organised by the Federation, which defrays the initial expenses. A letter in reference to the mission, written by Dr. Harris and Dr. Forsyth, was circulated in the county by the Federation.

Carlisle and District.

The work of this Federation during the year has chiefly been re-organisation. The Federation has taken the deepest possible interest in the Simultaneous Mission proposal, and at most of the centres missions have been held. The zealous Secretary, Rev. A. E. Killon, has visited most of the towns of the county since his appointment. The newly-formed Council at Penrith was so far advanced as to feel they must take part in the Simultaneous Mission. Its formation was largely due to the visit of Mr. Killon and the General Organising Secretary. The speakers at the inaugural meeting were Dr. Lawson Forster and Rev. Matthew T. Pickering. The Councils have been active in the promotion of temperance.

Devon (excepting Plymouth district.)

This Federation has been engaged during the year in the formation of Councils in places where none existed, so that now the entire area of the Federation is covered by local Councils, sending deputations to visit and help Councils in their work, and arranging, in connection with the Councils, for the Simultaneous Mission. The affiliated Councils now include Exeter, Tiverton, Exmouth, Bideford, Barnstaple, Torrington, Torquay, Newton Abbot, Ilfracombe, South Molton, Teignmouth, Dawlish, Dartmouth, Honiton, Okehampton, Crediton and Chulmleigh. Rev. J. Charteris Johnston, of Torquay, who has rendered great service to the Federation movement, is President; Mr. A. H. Toone, Treasurer; and the Rev. C. Stedeford, who has displayed great activity, is Secretary.

Durham and Northumberland.

The past year has been an exceedingly busy one for this Federation. As usual meetings have been held for the elucidation and enforcement of Free Church principles, education, temperance, &c. House-to-house visitation has been undertaken very generally, with a view to the Simultaneous Mission. Special attention has been given to elections such as Boards of Guardians, Burial Boards, where the interests of Free Churchmen were likely to be affected. Visitation to the poor in the workhouses has been regularly undertaken, and services held. In one or two cases a chaplain is paid to attend to the poor out of the funds of the Council.

The great County Conference has not been held this year in consequence of the Councils being engrossed in their preparations for the great Mission. Over 120 missions were held during the whole of the campaign, and over 700 churches and societies took part in the work. The utmost heartiness prevailed in all the churches, and the spirit of unity was never more manifest than at the present time. Long before the mission commenced the revival had commenced arising out of the result of meeting together for prayer and the interesting work done by the different churches, in order to ensure the ultimate success of the mission. In one colliery village alone, during one week, it is reported that over 100 converts were made through the agency of a simple prayer meeting. Four new Councils have been formed during the year, one at Willington, in the county of Durham, another at Wingate and district, one at Haydon Bridge, which is doing a most remarkable work, and the fourth at Lumley; several others are in process of formation.

The Federation Secretary, the Rev. W. Glover, Newcastle, is one of the most indefatigable of men. He has been abundant in labours.

East Lancashire and East Cheshire.

This important Federation includes twenty-three Councils, with ten Sub-Councils, an advance upon last year of four Councils and four Sub-Councils. During the year, the Rev. W. D. McLaren, M.A., delivered five Lectures on "Bible Study and Experience," at New Mills and Littleborough. In Manchester, two courses of three Lectures each were given—one to ministers, on "Evolution and the Fatherhood," and the other to the laity, on "Christ and the Bible." All three Lectures were highly esteemed. Only the absorbing necessities of the Simultaneous Mission prevented Courses being arranged in other centres. At the request of the Federation, the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., visited Ashton-under-Lyne, to preach and lecture. For the greater part of the year the attention of the Federation has naturally been occupied chiefly by the Simultaneous Mission, with the object of assisting the Councils. All the Councils, with possibly one or two exceptions, took part in the Mission. Through the able and enthusiastic Secretary of the Federation, the Rev. J. Kirk Maconochie, in consultation with local friends, a considerable number of important allocations of missioners were made. The Secretary has hit upon the excellent idea of printing along with his report, brief reports of all the affiliated Councils which are doing good, steady work.

At the Annual Meeting of the Federation, held in December, Mr. W. Brimelow, J.P., was succeeded as President by Dr. Marshall Randles. Dr. McLaren, of Manchester, is associated in the Vice-Presidency with Dr. Mackennal and the Rev. S. F. Collier. Mr. H. Davenport Ledwurd is the Treasurer. The prospects of the Federation are good.

East Norfolk.

This Federation expressed its sympathy with Mr. Burrell Hammond, a farmer, who received notice to quit from Lord Hastings last Michaelmas. His landlord wrote, "The reason you have notice to quit your farm is that I am anxious to have a tenant who would act on more friendly terms with his landlord, and also one not so hostile to the Clergy and everything connected with the Church of England." Mr. Hammond's offence was being a deacon of a Congregational Church, a local preacher, and a sympathiser with the work of the Evangelical Free Churches. At the Annual Conference and Public Meeting, a strenuous and successful endeavour was made to arouse interest in the Simultaneous Mission. Addresses were given at these Meetings by the Rev. C. H. Kelly, Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., and the General Organising Secretary of the National Council. A Village Mission Fund has been raised, which amounts to more than £60. Every Council in the Federation has taken up the Simultaneous Mission, and a great many villages are being missioned. The Federation is admirably served by its Officers. Rev. W. A. Hammond is the President; Mr. J. W. Jewson, Treasurer; and the Rev. H. J. Bayley, Long Stratton, Secretary.

Gloucester and Hereford.

Meetings of this Federation were held during the year at Cheltenham, Dursley, and Stroud. Special attention was given to Mission Services for the villages, in order to prevent Councils overlapping, and, on the other hand, to save any village, however remote from a town, being left out of the arrangements. All the Councils entered into the Simultaneous Mission most heartily, and the Devotional Meetings were soul-inspiring. The devoted Secretary, Mr. Charles Hayward, Cheltenham, visited nearly all the chief towns in the Federation during the year, and was warmly received at each place. Tetbury, which was visited in conjunction with Rev. R. Nott, Mr. Jacob, and other Stroud friends, after an enthusiastic meeting held in the Baptist Church, decided to join the Stroud Council, instead of having one of its own. This accession will give strength to both towns. The result of a visit to Ledbury and Newent has been that a Council has been formed for those towns and the surrounding district, thus bringing the whole of Gloucestershire into touch with Free Church Council work. The Free Church Catechism is in use at Cheltenham, Stroud, Ebley, Forest of Dean, and Uley. Mr. H. Rogers, J.P., Hereford, is President of the Federation, and Mr. J. Playle, Cheltenham, Treasurer.

Hants.

Mr. J. R. Smith, J.P., is the President of the Federation, Mr. H. M. Gilbert, Treasurer, and the Rev. W. Vincett Cook, the devoted and energetic Secretary.

The Seventh Annual Meeting was held at Gosport on November 7th, 1900. The Council were entertained at luncheon by the Gosport Local Council, presided over by Mr. B. Nicholson, J.P. At the General Meeting Mr. J. R. Smith, J.P., occupied the chair. The meeting was largely attended. Later a Public Conference was held, over which Mr. J. W. Blake presided. The subject was the Simultaneous Mission, with special reference to the villages—and was introduced in an able paper by Rev. G. Roberts Hern. A free discussion followed. Five-minute speeches were given by several local Council Secretaries and others, and suggestions were made by Rev. C. H. Kelly, President of the National Council, and the General Organising Secretary of the National Council.

A public demonstration was held in the evening. There was an enthusiastic and expectant audience, presided over by the newly-elected President, Mr. J. R. Smith, who made a capital speech. After an explanatory financial statement by the Treasurer, Mr. Henry March Gilbert, addresses were delivered by Mr. Kelly and the General Organising Secretary.

During the year no fewer than 32 additional churches have affiliated with the Federation, bringing up the total number to considerably over 250. Thirty-one new personal members have been enrolled during the year, so that the personal membership is nearly 300 strong. The Council at Ryde has affiliated with the Federation and new Councils have been formed at Fareham, Andover and Alton. The list of possible Councils for the county is now practically complete. The Federation suggested to every church in the county the observance of Citizen Sunday. Small causes in isolated villages are being affiliated with neighbouring Councils. Ten such churches, for example, have been brought into association with the Portsmouth Council during the last year. The officers of the sixteen local Councils, on the invitation of the Federation, held a helpful conference for interchange of suggestions bearing on their work. A conference on the Girls' Guild, addressed by the General Organising Secretary of the National Council, was held at Southampton, and was a marked success. A resolution was unanimously passed urging local Councils to proceed at once to enrol members on the basis of the scheme issued by the National Council. The Simultaneous Mission was taken up with enthusiasm by the Councils of the county. The educational work of the Federation among young people, under the direction of the Rev. Arthur D. Martin, has been very valuable. Examinations on Free Church history and principles were conducted in three divisions: higher grade, senior, and junior. The diligence and intelligence shown by the competitors was very gratifying. Their number was larger last year than on any previous occasion. The text books used were Professor Adeney's "From Christ to Constantine," and Wallis Smith's "Outlines of Early Church History." The financial deficit of the Federation has been greatly reduced.

Hull and District.

The work of this Federation has been prosecuted with vigour and has met with considerable success. Its best work, probably, has been in getting into association with a large number of villages which lie beyond the bounds of any existing Council. From these, several personal members of the Federation have been secured; and it is confidently anticipated that excellent service will be rendered to these outlying and isolated districts. A representative Mission Committee was formed, which, after careful deliberation, made arrangements for Mission Services in quite a large number of villages in connection with the Simultaneous Mission movement. A Council has been set up in South Holderness, by which a large number of villages are brought into union with each other for heartening and for work. Attempts have also been made to form a Council at Market Weighton. In connection with one of the business meetings of the Federation, a good demonstration was held at Beverley, when a sermon and vigorous addresses were delivered. The Annual Public Meetings were held in Hull on October 2nd. These included a conference in the afternoon, when papers were read on "The Councils and Social Reform," and on "The Place of Puritanism in the Life of To-day." A sermon by the President-elect of the National Council, the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., followed. The attendance at these services, as well as the evening demonstration, was seriously affected by the agitation of the General Election; but this notwithstanding, most successful meetings were held, and their fruit will abide. Considerable aggressive work is contemplated, and the future is full of promise. The Rev. James Pickett is the energetic Secretary of the Federation.

Kent.

The following Councils have been visited during the year by the Secretary (Rev. W. A. H. Legg, M.A.): Tunbridge Wells, Margate, Ramsgate, Deal, Ashford, Maidstone, Gravesend and Sevenoaks. The Secretary delivered a course of six lectures on "The Land Marks of the Free Churches" in Maidstone, which has been re-delivered in Canterbury, and which will be printed specially with a view to reaching the young people of the county. He is also compiling a map of the county, with a marked list of all the villages where there are Free Church Services at present, in order (1) to link to some Council in the county every such village, and (2) to commence work if possible where at present there is none. It is hoped that in this way the county may be covered and the Free Churches strengthened throughout. The Council took up the Simultaneous Mission very heartily, both as regards the towns and adjacent villages. Probably every minister served as missioner in some place or other. The movement is exciting an increasing interest, and its value is being felt and appreciated. The Federation includes twelve Councils. The Rev. J. C. Carlile, of Folkestone, an energetic worker, is the President, and Alderman W. Brownscombe, J.P., Treasurer. The Federation owes much to the ability and ingenuity of its Secretary.

Leeds and District.

This Federation, formed in the autumn of 1899, consisted of the following Councils:—Leeds, Harrogate, Stanningley, Wakefield, Batley, Ossett, Dewsbury, Birstall, Morley, and Normanton. Since that time the executive has assisted in organising Councils at Castleford, Snaith, Ripon, Mirfield, Horsforth, Yeadon, Garforth, Drighlington, Pudsey, Nidd Valley, and Pontefract. The President (Rev. Prof. J. S. Banks), and the Revs. J. E. Radcliffe (Leeds), D. Walters (Leeds), G. Watt Smith, M.A. (Leeds), Jas. Legge, M.A. (Leeds), S. Chadwick (Leeds), Henry Webb (Leeds), Thos. Mitchell (Leeds), T. Nightingale (Leeds), R. S. Holmes (Wakefield), J. E. Mackintosh (Dewsbury), O. K. Hobbs, M.A. (Batley), and the Treasurer, Mr. Wesley North, have rendered good service in the exposition of the principles and aims of the Free Church Council Movement.

The Annual Meeting was held on May 29th. There was a large attendance of representatives of the Councils. The General Organising Secretary gave an address on the future work of the movement.

The arrangements for the Simultaneous Mission received the constant attention of the Committee. Often difficulties arose, but the great heartiness with which all the Councils entered on the work was very helpful. Many places had four or five centres. Great earnestness was put into the work of preparation, and some Councils showed great skill and method in their plans. An "All Day Conference" was held in November, addressed by Rev. Dr. Townsend, Miss Annie Meyer, Rev. Thos. Cook, Rev. T. Graham Tarn, and Rev.

Zadock Robinson. The meetings were well attended, and a stimulus was certainly carried to all the Councils, which must have been most helpful. A few Leeds friends invited all the ministers in the district to luncheon, which passed off very successfully.

On Dec. 3rd the National Council Committee held a session in Leeds, and the Secretary arranged for ten Councils to hold public gatherings in the evening, so that when the business was over, there was a distribution of the members, by various trains, over the whole district—Dr. Monro Gibson was at Harrogate, Mrs. Lenwood went to Normanton, Prof. Rendel Harris to Dewsbury, Mr. R. Bird, J.P., to Yeadon, Rev. Dr. Ross to Ripon, Dr. Gautby and Mr. D. Shepherd to Snaith, Rev. C. A. Fellowes to Castleford, and Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell to Garforth, &c. The General Organising Secretary and Rev. J. T. Parr addressed a meeting in Leeds.

The West Riding County Council only grant stage play licences on condition that there shall be no application for excise licences. Some of the non-county boroughs are agitating for the power to grant these licences themselves. Many of the members of these smaller bodies are interested in companies owning these places of amusement, so that there is a fear that temptations to use intoxicants would be increased by the change. The executive is alive to the matter, and are assuring the West Riding County Council that they approve of the restrictions which have hitherto been made, and will do their utmost to prevent a change. The energetic Secretary of the Federation is Mr. T. H. Fleming, Leeds.

Leicester and Rutland.

The growth of this Federation is marked by the fact that the Annual Meetings have now assumed the form of a United Free Church Demonstration. Last year the Temperance Hall in Leicester was taken for the Evening Meeting, and a large and enthusiastic audience assembled. The speakers were Mr. Lloyd-George, M.P., Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., and the General Organising Secretary of the National Council. For the first time in the history of the Federation, *all* the Councils were represented, and the whole series of meetings during the day were marked by great enthusiasm.

The Reports received during the year from affiliated Councils show most encouraging progress all along the line. The main feature of the Federation's work was the preparation for the Simultaneous Mission, which was heartily taken up by all the Councils.

The Autumnal Meetings at Loughboro' were entirely devoted to the interests of the Mission, and the Missioners appointed for Leicester, Revs. J. Gregory Mantle and F. Hall, addressed the Meetings. The Federation has rendered considerable assistance to the Councils in obtaining Missioners, especially in the rural districts, and just 100 Missions were arranged by the Councils in the Federation area.

The Federation sustained a severe loss by the removal of the Rev. A. M. Perkins, from Oakham, to Rawdon, Yorks., and placed on record its high appreciation of the splendid services rendered by him.

The Federation publishes some excellent hints to local Councils and suggestions of work.

No Federation in the country is more splendidly officered. Alderman A. Wakerley, Ex-Mayor of Leicester, is President, Mr. John Coy is Treasurer, and the Rev. E. B. Woods, B.D., Secretary.

Lincoln.

The Councils included in this Federation are Lincoln, Louth, Grimsby, Gainsboro', Grantham, Horncastle, Boston, Long Sutton, Bourne, Peterboro', and Scunthorpe. The Secretary, the Rev. G. H. Bennett, has been personally and by correspondence in touch with the Councils, who took up heartily the Simultaneous Mission, and carried out their local arrangements effectively. We regret to report that Mr. Bennett has been prevented by a prolonged and serious illness from doing all or nearly all that he desired to accomplish, and we pray for his speedy recovery. The Federation has sustained further loss in the resignation of the President, Alderman Harrison, of Lincoln, through illness.

Metropolitan.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., whose services on behalf of the Simultaneous Mission cannot be overestimated, is the President, and Dr. Parker is the President-Elect of this Federation, which includes sixty Councils. The chief work of the year was the preparation for the Simultaneous Mission, missioners being arranged for in about 200 centres. The Federation took account of the London School Board Election, declaring its continuous loyalty to the compromise and pledging itself to resist any effort to alter it or to reopen the religious controversy. The election resulted in the return of the Progressive Unsectarians by a small majority. The Federation also issued a manifesto in regard to the Borough Council elections, pointing out that the new municipal arrangements provided a great opportunity and laid a heavy burden of responsibility upon all Christian citizens, and that it was of the utmost importance that the members of the new Councils should be men of the highest character and of the most unselfish aims. The Federation called upon all Free Churchmen to discharge their duty and to secure, so far as in them lay, that the election and the inauguration of the Council should mark a new and hopeful era in the good of London, and in promoting the righteousness, the co-operation, and the civic devotion which were essential to its well-being. Rev. J. Fletcher, the able Secretary, along with Mr. Meyer, the President, has during the year visited nearly all the Councils, and most successful meetings have been held.

Northamptonshire.

During the last year, the Federation has carried into execution a scheme for helping the country churches. A series of over eighty lectures has been delivered upon the History and Principles of Free Church Life. Not one of the lecturers has charged a fee for the lecture itself. The expenses incurred in travelling have been met by a special fund raised by the Rev. T. Stephens, B.A., late of Wellingboro, now of London.

In November, a very successful meeting was held in College Street Chapel, Northampton, when there was a Conference on the Mission in the afternoon, and a public meeting in the evening, addressed by the Rev. J. C. Carlile, of Folkestone, and J. Bamford Slack, B.A., of London. The Rev. S. T. Bosward, B.A., was elected President; Mr. A. B. Wallis, of Kettering, Vice-President; Mr. Rennie Wilkinson, Thrapston, Treasurer, and the Rev. Arthur Morgan, Secretary.

North Bucks and North Oxon.

There are 130 Churches in this Federation, which represent 4,700 Members, 8,200 Scholars, and 27,000 Sittings. The work has, during the year, been restricted almost entirely to Public Meetings, and distribution of literature in reference to Free Church principles and preparation for the Simultaneous Mission. The Councils included are Banbury, Buckingham, Fenny Stratford, Stewkley, Thame and Woburn Sands. Mr. J. W. Heley is President, Mr. G. Harrison, J.P., Treasurer, and the Rev. J. L. Cooper, of Long Crendon, Thame, is the Secretary.

North-East Lancashire.

A meeting of the following Free Church Councils was called to consider the advisability of forming a Federation—Blackburn, Great Harwood, Nelson, Barrowford, and Colne—at the Independent Methodist (Salem) Chapel, Nelson, on November 2nd, 1900, the General Organising Secretary being also present. The meeting was unanimous in recommending to the several Councils the advisability of forming a Federation, to be called the North-East Lancashire Federation of Free Church Councils; the meeting thereupon adjourned to December 19th.

In the meantime each Council was consulted on this matter of Federation, and the report from each Council, as given at the adjourned meeting, held in Clayton Street Wesleyan Chapel, Blackburn, was such as to confirm the recommendation of the previous meeting. Whereupon it was decided to proceed to election of Officers of the Society, and to frame the necessary constitution. Mr. J. H. Horrocks was elected President; Mr. J. W. Marsden, Treasurer; and Mr. W. H. Riding, Colne, Secretary.

The important county of Lancashire is now covered by Federations, and a splendid work is being done.

North Staffs.

The work of this Federation during the year has been largely that of preparation for the Simultaneous Mission. It formed the subject of a paper by the Rev. S. Nutton and conference at the Annual Meeting of the Federation. A Special Mission Committee was appointed, and missions arranged for in fourteen centres in the villages. The enthusiastic secretary, Rev. W. Lansdell, B.A., A.T.S., made the arrangements for three courses of lectures to lay preachers by the Rev. W. D. Maclaren, M.A., on Bible Study and Exposition, which were given in Hanley, Burslem, Stoke and Feuton. These proved of the highest value and were much appreciated.

There are fifteen Councils in the Federation. Mr. William Woodall is President and Alderman T. Arrowsmith, J.P., Treasurer.

In preparation for the Simultaneous Mission a Special Conference was held in connection with the Annual Demonstration of the Federation. This was well attended, and a helpful discussion followed papers read by the Revs. J. Fleming, T. Lawry Withington, and J. Hoatson. The evening meeting was addressed by the Rev. F. L. Wiseman, B.A., and the General Organising Secretary. There was not so large an attendance as in previous years, but the spirit and tone of the meeting was good.

The Secretary has visited most of the Councils during the year, and has been able in many ways to help, specially the smaller Councils, in their work.

North Wales.

There are thirty-six local Councils in North Wales. *In Montgomeryshire*—Newtown, Montgomery, Welshpool. *In Merionethshire*—Barmouth, Dolgelley, Corwen and district, Festiniog. *In Denbighshire* — Denbigh, Wrexham, Rhos, Cardforth, Colwyn Bay (Welsh and English), Abergele, Llanrwst and district. *In Carnarvonshire* — Carnarvon, Portdinorwic, Bangor, Bethesda, Penmaenmawr, Conway, Llandudno. *In Anglesey* — Holyhead, Llangefni. *In Flintshire*—Rhyl (Welsh and English), Rhuddlan, Mostyn, Holywell, Bagillt, Flint, Halkyn, Buckley, Mold, Connah's Quay, Liverpool (Welsh). The Councils at Portdinorwic, Rhuddlan, Mostyn and Connah's Quay have been formed this year. Most of the Councils are active and energetic and doing good work. The chief work of the Federation last year was the preparation for the Simultaneous Mission. District meetings were held to explain the nature and aim of the Mission and to arouse the attention of the churches. The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr's paper was translated into Welsh and 5,000 copies of it distributed to the Councils, the ministers and deacons of the churches. By these means a wide interest was taken in the Mission. Even in country districts that are not connected with any Council, preparations were made for the Mission, and the very zealous Secretary of the Federation (Rev. D. Oliver) found it difficult to meet the demand for missioners, yet he managed to overcome the difficulty. "Our great want," writes Mr. Oliver, "is Welsh literature. The movement is not known and understood as it should be, and we have no literature in Welsh to give the necessary information. A little has been done. The Catechism has been translated into Welsh. I have also translated into Welsh the 'digest' of the Constitution of the National Council and Mr. Parr's papers on the Mission. A Welsh Hymnal has been published for the Mission, 12,000 have been sold, and I continue to receive orders almost every day."

Notts.

During the year now closing, the able and active Secretary (Rev. Francis J. Fry) has visited each Council Centre, and devoted a great deal of time and pains to assisting in the arrangement for the Simultaneous Mission, having secured the services of nine missioners on behalf of the Councils. He has given lectures on Free Church history and principles at Retford, Netherfield, Worksop, Leabrooks, Hyson Green, Beeston, South Normanton, Woodborough and Alfreton; addressed meetings at Basford, Keyworth, Sawley, Selston, Long Eaton, Arnold, South Normanton, Belper, Hucknall Torkard, Whitwell, Ruddington, Woodborough, Heanor, Netherfield, Annesley Woodhouse, Mansfield, Stanton Hill and Sutton, and preached at Whitwell, Arnold and Burton Joyce. New Councils have been organised at Whitwell and South Normanton, and the East Kirkby and Hyson Green Councils revived and reorganised. A Conference of Secretaries was held at the house of the President, Mr. W. Smith, J.P., at Langley Mill; this, together with the visits of the President and Secretary, has done much to deepen a sense of unity, and to rouse enthusiasm. Summer meetings were held at Newark, and addressed by the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., and the General Organising Secretary. Mr. Greenhough's speech was printed and circulated throughout the Federation area. Carlton Council, through the Secretary, has engaged the Notts Congregational Union in a prospective forward movement at Colwick Vale, a rapidly growing suburb of Nottingham. Special attention has been paid to the Churches in the villages.

Sheffield and district.

Mr. Henry Adams is the President and the Rev. E. Carrington the Secretary of this Federation. Mr. Carrington is also Secretary of the Sheffield Council, and is an enthusiast for the movement. During the year a public demonstration was held, when the Rev. S. Chadwick preached in the afternoon, and he and the Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers were the principal speakers at the evening meeting. Meetings have been organised and carried through, generally with gratifying success, at several of the Council centres. Chesterfield has been visited, and the ministers there induced to take such steps as have led to the formation of a Council. The Councils concerned united in a memorial to the West Riding County Council to retain in its own hands the power of granting stage-play licences, and not to hand over the same to the Corporations within the area of their jurisdiction. Councils have been formed at Chesterfield, Wath, Melton, and Staveley. Considerable help was afforded to the local Councils in the selection and appointment of missioners.

South Devon and East Cornwall.

A most inspiring and stimulating Conference was held last October at Liskeard, at which the Simultaneous Mission was the principal subject considered. The Rev. J. T. Maxwell, of Plymouth, read a most impressive paper on this subject at the morning meeting. The Rev. J. Charteris Johnston preached in the afternoon, and he and the General Organising Secretary addressed the evening meeting. This Conference must have contributed much to the remarkable enthusiasm with which the various missions were undertaken.

As the area of this Federation is great, and frequent Meetings of the Executive impossible, the energetic Secretary, Rev. G. Lupton Allen, undertook to carry out the arrangements for the Simultaneous Mission by correspondence. A circular was sent to every minister within the Federation, asking if he were willing to act as missioner for any place within the area, and a list of those who were willing to do so was then sent to the Secretary of each Council. In this way more than a dozen missions were arranged. Several Councils, however, resolved to rely upon their own local ministers entirely. Several groups of villages lying outside the jurisdiction of any Council applied to the Secretary for help, and missioners were found for them.

The energies of the Councils seem to have been absorbed so fully by their arrangements for the mission, that in only a very few cases has the Secretary been asked to provide speakers for public meetings. He has visited, in some cases more than once, Liskeard, Holsworthy, Kingsbridge, Totnes, and Looe. At the latter place is a Council which has hitherto only existed in name owing to local difficulties, but it is now reconstructed and in a fair way to become an active force. An entirely new Council is being formed for a group of large villages of which Calstock is the centre.

The President, Mr. G. P. Dymond, B.A., of Plymouth, has rendered valuable service during the year by lecturing or speaking at Callington, Liskeard, Oreston (Three Towns' Council) and Lostwithiel (Bodmin Council).

The Secretary has been in constant touch with all the Councils during the year, and finds that useful activity has prevailed in nearly all.

South Durham and Cleveland.

A great demonstration was held in Exchange Hall, Stockton, on Thursday, April 5th. Addresses were delivered by Ald. J. Samuel, M.P., and Dr. Monro Gibson. The district has been divided into areas to be covered by the different Councils. Information has been collected *re* villages, church and school accommodation, educational trusts, etc. Missions were arranged in all the Councils in the district in connection with the National Simultaneous Mission. The Secretary (Rev. R. Ensoll) visited most of the smaller Councils. A new Council has been formed for South Bank and district. Committees have been appointed to act in the interests of Temperance and Education. A Public Conference on Temperance and a Free Church Demonstration were held at West Hartlepool, on Tuesday, November 13th. Addresses were given by Sir Christopher Furness, the General Organising Secretary, Revs. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., and G. A. Bennetts, B.A. The Councils included in the Federation are Middlesbrough, Stockton and Thornaby, West Hartlepool, Hartlepool, Guisboro', Loftus, Redcar, Saltburn, South Bank, and Middleton-in-Teesdale. The Rev. J. E. Barton is the President, and Mr. R. F. Brittain, Treasurer.

South Wales and Monmouthshire (Eastern Division).

This Federation was formed in May, last year. It includes the following Councils: Cardiff, Newport, Penarth, Pontypridd, Merthyr, Barry, Rhondda Valley, Blaina, and Nantyglo, Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Caerphilly, Brecon, Builth, Tredegar, Bridgend, Tondu and Aberkenfig, Abergavenny, Brynmawr, Monmouth, Llantrisant, Mountain Ash, and Rhiwderin. Mr. Robert Bird, J.P., is President, Mr. Alfred Holman, Treasurer, and Mr. David Shepherd, Cardiff, Secretary. Since its formation, the Federation has done a great deal of work in strengthening weak Councils, and forming new ones. There is every prospect of considerable work being done by each Council. The inaugural public meetings of the Federation were held at Merthyr, in October. Rev. John Williamson, M.A., of Cardiff, read a notable Paper on the Simultaneous Mission, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., Rev. Thomas Stephens, B.A., of London (in Welsh), and the General Organising Secretary. The prospects of the Federation are decidedly bright.

South Wales (Western Division).

It was felt that two Federations for South Wales were necessary, and accordingly two have been formed, with their centres at Cardiff and Swansea respectively. Representatives from all the Councils in the district gathered at the latter place in December, and resolved to form a Federation. The General Organising Secretary was present. At the adjourned meeting the Rev. Edward Nicholas was appointed Secretary. This is the youngest of the Federations.

It is believed that when once it is brought into complete working order, it will speedily create Councils where they do not exist, and become a great force in the life of the district.

Sussex.

This Federation has the invaluable services of Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., as President. Mr. Rickett is resolved to do all that in him lies to make the Federation a model one. The Councils of the county have shown much earnestness and accomplished a great deal of work. Many of the Councils have appealed successfully against the granting of new licences. Brighton has been divided into thirty-three parishes for the purpose of house-to-house visitation, and a parish allotted to each church. Open-air services have been held at Hastings. The Eastbourne Council has attempted an affiliation of all the local village churches. Gipsy Smith has conducted a successful mission at Worthing. The Council maintains its close intercourse with the country districts. The Workhouse services are very successful. At Chichester a Girls' Guild has been brought into working order, and Workhouse services are continued successfully. The Lewes Council conducts a continuation school in the old British School. This is the only unsectarian school in the town. The Council has also run a series of lectures. At Midhurst there have been successful evangelistic services and open-air services. The Horsham Council is very active and continues its services in the Workhouse. At East Grinstead the Parochial System has been adopted and worked. All the Councils took up the Mission. Towards the guarantee fund Mr. Rickett contributed £200. The Free Church movement has gripped Sussex. There are eleven Councils in the county. The Federation is magnificently served by the Rev. S. B. Lane, the Secretary.

West Cornwall.

This Federation was formed to combine the Councils of West Cornwall, extending from Newquay to Penzance. The Annual Meetings at Hayle, in October, were very successful. The speakers included Mr. Josiah Nix, and the General Organising Secretary. The Chair was occupied by the Rev. J. Cockin, Truro, the President. The General Organising Secretary of the National Council expressed his delight at the bright outlook of the Federation, and offered his congratulations on the great improvement that had taken place during the past twelve months. The Rev. J. Bransom was elected President for the ensuing year, the Treasurer, Mr. J. Doidge, and the Secretary, the Rev. J. F. Lawis, were re-elected. A useful Conference on the Simultaneous Mission was held. Mr. Josiah Nix remarked that the object of the Federation movement was not to push sectarianism or claim any political right, but to extend the Kingdom of Christ in the world. If the drink trouble was to be overcome, it would have to be done by Nonconformity. The General Organising Secretary acknowledged the assistance which the Press everywhere had given to the Simultaneous Mission. The Federation worked the Mission in its district very heartily. Branches of the Free Church Girls' Guild have already been formed within the area. Practically the whole of Cornwall is now covered with Councils.

West Lancashire and West Cheshire.

This Federation has now been in existence nearly four years, and has an excellent record of work. The number of affiliated Councils is twenty-one, an increase of three during the year. The Spring Conference and Demonstration were held at Southport. The Conference was on "Successes and Hindrances" of Free Church Councils, and constituted a useful symposium on the most successful methods to be adopted by Councils as proved by experience. Resolutions were adopted calling for Sunday Closing of Licensed Houses, commending Lord Peel's Report as affording a practical basis for legislation, and supporting the Bill for the prohibition of delivery of intoxicants to children under sixteen years of age. The Evening Demonstration was addressed by the Revs. J. Tolefree Parr and F. Luke Wiseman, B.A. The Autumn Meetings were at Warrington. The Afternoon Conference was a memorable one on the subject of the Simultaneous Mission, and brought a large impetus to the movement. The Evening Meeting, which was addressed by Dr. Townsend, was devoted to the same theme. The Councils in the Federation entered into the Mission with great devotion and local initiative, and practically the whole district was covered. Most extensive preparations were made in Liverpool. The officers of the Federation include the Rev. C. F. Aked, President; Mr. W. P. Hartley, J.P., Treasurer; and the Rev. Robert Veitch, M.A., Secretary. A more zealous and able combination it would be difficult to get.

West Midland.

Sixty-two Councils are affiliated in this Federation, of which Mr. George Cadbury is Treasurer, and which from the beginning has distinguished itself by deep spiritual and evangelistic activity. The Rev. J. M. Gwynne Owen, the President, has rendered great service to the Federation by systematic visitation of the associated Councils. During the year two new enterprises have been started—the Young Women's Friendly League, and a scheme for the better education of young people in Free Church history and principles. Already fourteen Councils have taken up the Young Women's Friendly League. The Cradley Council has gone further and established an Evening Home for Women and Girls. Mr. George Cadbury made a special gift of £25 to meet the initial expenses of the League. The Executive of the Federation is specially anxious that it should be most clearly understood that there is no antagonism or rivalry between this scheme and the Free Church Girls' Guild of the National Council. The Federation is encouraging the formation in connection with the Church and Sunday schools within its area, of classes for the study of Free Church history and principles. A special text-book entitled "The Church of Christ: Lessons of its Early History," has been prepared, and is sold at 6d. The editor of this excellent little volume of about 100 pages is Dr. W. T. Davison, who, together with the Rev. J. M. Gwynne Owen, Professor Vernon J. Bartlet (of Mansfield College), and the Rev. H. B. Workman, M.A., are the writers. The Federation has lost two most active members during the year, Mr. George Ingall has died, and the Rev. J. Beveridge, M.A., B.D., has removed to Dundee. The Federation rendered considerable help to the local Councils in providing missioners for the Simultaneous Mission, and in other ways. Mr. George Cadbury supplied the Councils with "Invitation Cards" to be used in the house-to-house visitation in connection with the Mission. Mr. J. K. Starley, J.P., of Coventry, is the new President of the Federation. Mr. Starley is a prominent Congregationalist, and has from the first taken great interest in the Federation movement. The annual meeting of the Federation, held last November at Wednesbury Road Congregational Church, Walsall, was very successful. The Rev. Charles A. Fellowes discharges the duties of Acting Secretary with ability and unwearying energy.

West Norfolk.

The Rev. A. T. Osborne, King's Lynn, the Secretary of the Federation, is one of the most zealous and devoted supporters of the Federation movement in the country. The Federation, too, is fortunate in possessing so enthusiastic a Free Churchman for its President as Alderman A. Jermyn, J.P., ex-Mayor of Lynn. The Annual Meetings, held at Hunstanton, were very successful. The propagandist work of the Secretary has been chiefly in the form of correspondence, contributions to the local Press, the circulation of the Magazine, and occasional services conducted. It was deemed desirable to discontinue lantern lectures for the present, and give the churches opportunity to concentrate attention on the forthcoming mission.

The Secretary has been kept busy watching events affecting the interests of the Free Churches, and taking prompt action to defend them. Such as the following:—

(1.) *Rating of Sunday Schools.*—An attempt was made to do this in the case of the schools at Hunstanton: the Federation resisted, and the attempt was abandoned.

(2.) *Burials.*—No case of persecution has occurred, and a spirit of Christian courtesy seems to be pervading the rural clergy. In one case, however, a country vicar intrusively interfered, and, in a letter published in a local paper, threatened the President of the King's

Lynn Council with legal proceedings. A reply was published in the columns of the same organ, pointing out to the vicar that he had made himself liable to prosecution for a misdemeanour. He has since given no further trouble. The Secretary did his best to improve the occasion, and published an article on Reform in the Burial Laws.

(3.) *Schools.*—Although there is undoubtedly clerical oppression in the village Church Schools, it is extremely difficult to get conclusive evidence. Under the present state of the law, and with a hostile Department, to advise the withdrawal of children would be worse than useless. The Federation officials do their best to minimise the evil by keeping themselves in evidence.

(4.) *Clerical Misrepresentation.*—A local clergyman recently, in a public speech, magnified the liberality of Churchmen in supporting Church Schools, stating they had voluntarily given £42,000,000. The subject was dealt with in two successive leading articles in the local Press, pointing out that the amount stated was the aggregate of subscriptions given during a period of eighty-eight years, and placed it in comparison with the amount received by the Church from public funds during the same period, thus—

Amount received by Churchmen	...	£554,000,000
Amount given „	...	42,000,000

The above are only examples of the use that is continually made of the columns of the local Press to defend the rights of Free Churchmen and advocate their principles.

Wilts and East Somerset.

This Federation is fortunate in the possession of so energetic a Secretary as the Rev. S. B. Stribling, of Holt. Mr. Stribling has been in constant communication with the Secretaries of the Councils either by letters or by personal visits, in order to help them in their work. More villages have been brought into union with the Councils, and a map is being prepared indicating the boundaries of the Councils, and the villages already in union with them, and those which are not yet united. A joint meeting of Secretaries was held in April, at which various matters were discussed, and which proved very useful. The Councils have been urged to have a register of public meetings in connection with the churches of the different towns, in some accessible place, in order to avoid clashings.

A scheme for the Examination of the Young in Free Church Principles was decided upon early in the past year, and 1,500 circulars were issued through the Federation. The matter was taken up with spirit, and the examiners have been much gratified with the papers of the young people, and certificates and prizes are to be given. Pike's "Four Lectures on Nonconformity" was used by the senior divisions, and the Free Church Catechism by the juniors.

A county scheme for Young Women's Guilds is in contemplation, and the Secretaries and Representatives are to be asked to be prepared with suggestions at the Spring Meetings.

The Federation was able to give guidance and help to the Councils in connection with the Simultaneous Mission by obtaining a list of Ministers and others willing to assist in the towns, and in other ways. The Secretary wrote a letter to one of the newspapers in each district, explaining the aims and objects of the Free Church Federation, and calling attention to the Simultaneous Mission. This was published by the *Salisbury and Wilton Times*, the *Bath Herald*, the *Wiltshire Times*, the *Devizes Gazette*, and by other papers. The names of four ministers in the county have been obtained, who have promised to give lectures for the Federation, if asked by the several Councils.

The visits of the Rev. A. J. Palmer of Folkestone to the Spring Meetings at Chippenham, and that of the Rev. C. F. Aked of Liverpool to the Autumnal Meetings at Swindon were very stirring, and did much to encourage the work. The Sunday Closing (Monmouthshire) Bill was brought before the Spring Meetings, and by resolution, the Secretary was instructed to write to Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice and Lord Salisbury upon the subject.

The Federation, through its Secretary, has worked most cordially with all the local Secretaries. There has been no hitch whatever, and all are disposed to work together for the consolidation of work already in hand, or for the initiation of new enterprises.

York and District.

This district has been well visited by the Secretary, Rev. J. O. Ogilvy, and pamphlets, &c., bearing on the formation of Councils, have been sent to the ministers and leading members of the various churches. Since this was done, Councils have been formed at Whitby and Bedale. Pocklington Council, which has been defunct for a year or two, is organising a Simultaneous Mission, and there is a prospect of its being resuscitated. The district, which is a large and scattered one, with few large centres of population, is being considered in all its bearings, and it is hoped that great progress will be made soon. The Federation has the honour of possessing among its officers Mr. J. S. Rowntree, J.P., as President, and Mr. E. J. Birdsale as Treasurer.

FEDERATION ABROAD.

We venture to think that this year the reports on the spread of the Federation movement in other lands are even more interesting than they have ever been. In the United States in particular the movement is spreading most rapidly. That leading American papers have published historical articles on the Federation of the Churches in England is some indication of the hold which the idea of federal union has taken upon the American mind. Naturally the idea is quickly understood, for after all it is a national idea. The United States are a Federation of States just as our National Council is a Federation of Churches. The late Dr. Berry has told us that during his mission in the States, the point he was anxious to emphasise was that Federation does not at all affect the individuality or independence of any constituent church, but that "we merely federate for purpose common to the Kingdom of God. In the American Government is the very principle in operation—the principle of Federation in conjunction with local independence."

In Australia, and throughout New Zealand, the movement is also quickly gaining ground. The Rev. J. G. Raws, of Adelaide, South Australia, recently visited this country. Before leaving Mr. Raws called at the Central Office of the National Council, and urged that a deputation should be sent from this country to Australia to expound and advocate the Federation movement. Similar requests are constantly coming from all parts of Australasia, Africa, and other parts of the English-speaking world, and the most prominent religious leaders from across the seas, when visiting England, usually find their way to the headquarters of the National Council, seeking fuller information about Federation work. During the last year the correspondence of the Central Office with the distant parts of the world has been enormous.

South Africa.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell, B.A., who last year visited Africa, has kindly sent the following communication:—

"During my tour I preached twice, and sometimes thrice, every Sunday, and in larger towns, such as Capetown, Port Elizabeth, and Durban, had opportunities of meeting in conference most of the ministers associated with the Church Council movement. There is a very warm feeling of union amongst them, a union which the Federation movement has materially increased.

The problems before the Councils are similar to our own, with, I think, the exception that they interfere more directly in public affairs than we do. It struck me—though possibly I visited South Africa at a time when it was not easy to form an opinion upon the normal state of things—that the devotional side of the evangelical church work was too much neglected for the practical.

Noble work is being done in the attempt to grapple with the grosser vices which are apt to show themselves in a new country. Public life needs to have a better spirit infused into it. The native question is the question of the future. The Church Councils have nobly done their part in resisting the tendency to exploit the inferior races. Few persons in this country are aware of, or give proper credit to South African ministers for, their long battle on behalf of the native races.

The war has brought in its train duties and responsibilities toward sufferers that have been taken up splendidly by the Councils. Their reserves have been strained to the utmost to provide for those for whom military regulations can do nothing."

Rev. David Hunter, Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony, writes on January 5th to the General Organising Secretary:

Port Elizabeth.

"The Council has been in existence as nearly as possible two years. During that time it has sought to draw together the different churches of the evangelical bodies in the town of Port Elizabeth. Our town churches number ten—four Wesleyan, two Presbyterian, two Congregational, two Baptist. With the two lay and one ministerial representative of these are associated the ministers (European) of two coloured churches (Congregational), and one or two ministers without charges. We have held various large public meetings attended by townspeople of all classes—evangelistic, memorial, and thanksgiving. The attendance at these numbered several thousands in most instances, and the services helped us to give public feeling a more elevated turn. The Episcopalians and Roman Catholics did not at any time agree to work with us. Representations have been made as regards the social evil to the authorities, in collaboration with ladies' societies, and with results beneficial to public morals. We have now in hand an evangelistic campaign on a large scale, with the Rev. D. Russell, of Capetown, a well-known and admirable man, as missioner.

Real work has been and will be done; and there is a good deal of *esprit de corps* among our ministers, and comparatively little, as it seems to me, of sectarian rivalry. The first President of our Council is the Rev. Walter Friend, of Pearson Street Congregational Church, and Chairman of the Congregational Union of South Africa."

Rev. John C. Harris, minister of the Congregational Church, Johannesburg, and Secretary of the Johannesburg Church Council, writes to the General Organising Secretary:—

Johannesburg.

"It is my conviction that but for the War the Church Councils of South Africa would have joined with you in a Simultaneous Mission similar to yours, and our organisation was shaping to some such purpose. Councils are in active existence at Capetown, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Kimberley, and, I think East London. In enterprise and fervour they are worthy of the great movement which gave them birth.

The Witwatersrand Church Council, of which I was Hon. Sec., is for the present *non est*, owing to the War. The Council was formed in May, 1897, and speedily grew into a strong and influential organisation. We adopted the name 'Witwatersrand' because we included the whole of the Rand and Pretoria within our scope.

Our first President was Rev. P. J. G. Meiring, of the Dutch Reformed Church, who was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Mackenzie, an elder of the Presbyterian Church. We comprised ministers and delegates from all the Evangelical Churches, Baptist, Congregational, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan. At one of our large public meetings, called to protest against the maladministration of the Liquor Law, we were joined by the Jewish Rabbi and an Anglican minister.

It was estimated that the Witwatersrand Church Council represented no less than 15,000 persons, members and adherents of Christian churches on the Rand. Needful as it was before the war, we who are now scattered abroad feel very deeply that it will be of still greater value after the war. For the Christian churches in that distressed country will require to face the most difficult problems. Upon their zeal and wisdom will rest much of the work of reconstruction and reconciliation.

I believe there is a great future before the movement in South Africa, and venture to appeal for the sympathy and help of the home churches. I suggest that the English National Federation might set apart one or two of its prominent ministers to visit their brethren over sea. Last year Rev. R. J. Campbell, B.A., of Brighton, visited South Africa. You cannot realise all that his visit meant to the cause of Christ and Nonconformity among us, brief and hurried though his visit was. During the summer months, say April to October, your missioners, one or both, might be spared to visit us. In such ways your Federation would be recognising and meeting the obligations which rest upon the homeland towards the thousands of young men especially, who have gone to homes across the sea. I can assure you that if any such scheme be felt practicable on your part there will be most hearty co-operation on our side in South Africa. Many of us still remember the visits of Rev. John McNeill and Rev. Thomas Cook, and anyone sent us from the Federated Churches of Britain will be most enthusiastically welcomed and supported."

A National Movement in the United States.

Rev. Dr. E. B. Sanford, New York, Secretary of the National Committee on Federation of Churches, writes to the General Organising Secretary, on Dec. 19 :—

"During the past three months I have been very busy with plans looking to the organisation of State and Local Federations. My visits have extended west as far as Chicago, where a beginning has been made in federating the Church Forces.

In the vicinity of this city several Federations have been formed, the largest of which is that in Jersey City.

A Conference was held in the city of Syracuse, New York, Nov. 13th and 14th, that brought together delegates appointed by all of the strong religious denominations in the State. It was a meeting of unusual interest. After full discussion, with much enthusiasm, the Conference proceeded to organise the Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in the State of New York. They placed the work for the coming year in the hands of a strong and representative committee, who have already given earnest attention to the matters placed before them. They will give generous financial support to our National Committee, and have asked me to devote a part of my time in organising Local Federations within the bounds of the State.

New York, among us, is known as the 'Empire State.' With a population of over seven millions, it is marvellously rich in its material resources, and holds a commanding position among the States of the Union. I can already see that the action taken in New York has made a deep impression in other States, in several of which committees have been appointed and plans are maturing looking to definite organisation. Altogether the outlook is full of encouragement.

The problems with which we shall have to deal, in many ways, are very different from your own, but the need of co-operation is recognised on every hand, and the desire is growing for manifesting in practical ways the essential unity that underlies our denominational differences.

It was my privilege, December 6th, to give an address on the outlook of Federation at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Alliance of Pennsylvania held at Wilkesbarre, Pa. A resolution was adopted in this convention calling for mutual consultation on the part of the different denominations in all mission work that shall be undertaken in the future.

In the dawn of the new century my faith links itself with your hope and belief that this movement will ultimately belt together the Evangelical Churches of the entire English-speaking world."

The National Conference was held in Philadelphia on February 5th and 6th.

Chicago.

The Protestant ministers of Chicago held a Union Meeting on January 7th, at the First Methodist Church, and forwarded to Dr. Monro Gibson, our Honorary Secretary, a cablegram expressing sympathetic interest with the Simultaneous Mission. The Rev. Dr. H. F. Fisk, President of the Union and Principal of the Academy of North-Western University, in a letter to Dr. Gibson, says:—

> "This cablegram was sent by unanimous vote of meeting, and was the expression of a very hearty sentiment that found enthusiastic and eloquent utterance by speakers on the floor. The success of Protestant Evangelical Churches, already achieved in the mother country, and the greater successes that are hoped for, are a delight and an inspiration to us. We have earnest hopes that the work into which the churches of Chicago are entering anew with the beginning of the new century will be attended with the Divine blessing, and followed by a great ingathering into the churches."

Rhode Island.

Professor J. Q. Dealey, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A., writes to the General Organising Secretary:—

> "The movement towards Federation in Rhode Island is just beginning. For the last two years I have brought the matter before bodies of ministers in addressing them on social topics. Definite action was first taken at the Union Ministers' Meeting for Providence and vicinity. An address was given by the Rev. J. W. Hegeman, Ph.D., of New York, on 'The Federation of Churches,' and a committee was appointed to consider what might be done to promote the interests of a similar work in Providence. The ministers of the town were requested to preach on the subject. Since that time the Baptist State Conference has appointed a committee of three to consider and report on the matter at the next Annual Meeting (October, 1901). Several of the prominent ministers have preached sermons advocating the movement, and the churches of one of our districts in the southern part of the city are planning to unite on Federation lines, in advance of any more general movement on the part of the hundred or more churches of the entire city.
>
> It is hoped that the Methodists at their Annual Conference in April will also vote to appoint a committee with powers to co-operate with the committees already organised.
>
> It is the intention of those interested in the movement first to organise it in this city (Providence being our largest city, with a population of 176,000), then to extend it to the other four cities of the State, and finally to include the small towns and villages adjoining.
>
> A National movement is in process of organisation, fathered by the New York Federation, and this movement here will likely soon identify itself with the National movement."

Jamaica. The Union of Evangelical Churches, in this ancient colony, is a vigorous organisation that has already done much useful work, especially in the direction of removing the last vestige of denominational distinctions in the administration of the endowed schools of the island. The representatives of the churches that form the executive of the Union are elected by the Supreme Courts of the several churches, *i.e.*, the Congregational Union of Jamaica elects its representatives to the executive, the Baptist Union does the same, and so forth. At least one member of the Union, and a clerical member too, is a member of the Legislative Council of the island, the Hon. and Rev. James Macnee. His brother ministers supply his pulpit while he is attending to his legislative duties at Kingston, and Mr. Macnee says himself that his people contribute more to the collection when he is away. Even in Jamaica the Nonconformist conscience is vocal and powerful. Some of the pastors have been recently passing through very hard times, and have had to labour with their own hands as planters, bee-keepers, and in other capacities for the support of themselves and their families. The crying evils of Jamaica are immorality, thieving, laziness, and witchcraft. The Union is setting itself vigorously to combat and overcome these sins.

New South Wales. The development of the movement in this Colony is pursuing, in the main, the same lines as those along which it has travelled in England. The local Councils consist of members of Evangelical Churches. Then there are federations of local Councils, consisting of representatives chosen by these Councils. The source and summit of the movement is the Evangelical Council of New South Wales, corresponding to our National Council. This body consists of personal members and representatives from local Councils, Evangelical Churches, and other bodies. Among the work projected by the Council may be mentioned the "arranging where necessary for giving religious instruction in public schools," and the division of towns into districts, each one to be visited by representatives of an Evangelical congregation.

In September last the Evangelical Council of New South Wales held a great demonstration, in the Sydney Town Hall, to protest against certain statements made by the Roman Catholic Archbishop at the opening of St. Mary's Cathedral, and in the presence of the Governor of New South Wales (Lord Beauchamp), who attended avowedly as the representative of the Queen. The Archbishop is reported to have described Luther, Calvin, and Zwinglius as "notorious for their vices," and to have stated that "Protestantism covered Europe with blood and ruin in the sixteenth century, and has ever since been the helper and instrument of the worst foes of Christianity. It desecrated the home, it polluted the nuptial bed, it lowered the dignity of womanhood, it devastated the school, and stopped the progress of science." This rubbish would, in ordinary circumstances, have passed unnoticed, but the presence of the Queen's representative at the service and the absence of protest from him, made the matter a grave public scandal. The meeting of protest in the Town Hall was crowded with 10,000 persons, and an overflow gathering was held in a neighbouring church. Similar meetings were held in other parts of the Colony. The resolutions were sent to the Colonial Secretary. Lord Beauchamp has since prematurely terminated his Governorship.

The Council shows great activity in taking up public questions. Post-office Sunday labour, the proposed legalisation of the totalisator, the granting of a licence for a new hotel in defiance, it is stated, of the legally expressed veto of an overwhelming majority of the residents, dancing saloons, matrimonial bureaus, the Sunday opening of fruit shops, Sunday picnics in honour of English footballers, alleged illegal doings of certain magistrates—on all of these points the Council has made its influence felt by sending deputations to the Premier and members of the Government, by holding public meetings, and by other practical ways, and in most cases with successful results.

As a specimen of the work done by the local Councils in New South Wales we may take the case of the Granville Council. It has been working with success for the preservation of the sanctity of the Sabbath and against gambling. There is a Local Option Act in New South Wales, and the Council, in conjunction with the local temperance organisation, is making the best of the Act, imperfect as it is.

Then take the local Council at Sydney. Archbishop Smith and other members of the Anglican Church attend the Sydney Council with great regularity. The Council exercises a great moral influence on the public life of the city.

Sydney.

The Rev. J. B. Meharry, B.A., of Crouch Hill Presbyterian Church, who last year paid an extended visit to Sydney, writes to the General Organising Secretary :—

> "In my address to the General Assembly of New South Wales I urged strongly the desirability, if only from an economic point of view, of all non-Episcopal Churches making a great Federation, and the suggestion was well received. Indeed, in a few districts I found that one edifice was used by various denominations on alternate or successive Sundays, each party using its own form of service, in which the others joined; and I believe the plan worked well, and was productive of good results in the way of mutual respect."

Melbourne. A Convention has been held in Melbourne attended by 134 representatives from all parts of Victoria. Sir Frederick and Lady Sargood gave a luncheon, and Revs. A. R. Edgar, J. Meiklejohn, M.A., and Dr. Watkin, among others, delivered addresses. The "overlapping" question was the chief subject. "Wasteful" and "scandalous" were adjectives applied to the present system, and a committee was appointed to act as a court of arbitration to consider future building projects.

The General Organising Secretary has received a communication from the Rev. James Rickard, Melbourne, Secretary of the Council of Churches in Victoria. The Council, which has been in existence for between seven and eight years, is composed of forty members—twenty clerical and twenty lay. They are appointed annually by the Assemblies, Conferences, Unions, Synods, &c., of the denominations they represent, which include Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Lutherans, Primitive Methodists, United Methodists, and Bible Christians. "Our object," says the Secretary, "is to get at the mind of the various churches on subjects of common interest, and when we find a common ground, to act from that."

New Zealand. Four Evangelical Councils have been formed in New Zealand—at Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland. The Auckland Council held a special Sunday service in the Opera House in aid of the widows, orphans, and wounded of the British and Colonial forces now serving in South Africa. The Mayor presided. The Council has also held a house-to-house visitation.

Berlin. The Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., during a visit to Berlin last autumn, invited the Free Church ministers of the town to a breakfast, and induced them to form a Free Church Council.

The Rev. Julius Röhrbach, the Secretary of the Council, has sent an interesting communication to the General Organising Secretary. Mr. Röhrbach, who has been working in Berlin for twenty years, was at one time a member of Shoreditch Tabernacle (Rev. W. Cuff). The Free Churchmen of Berlin have long felt the need of "a united testimony and action towards the very powerful, almost Imperial, Lutheran State Church and an ungodly, highly educated, civilised, rough, and coarse world around us."

The population of Berlin is 1,800,000. There are 200,000 Roman Catholics, 75,000 Jews, and about 1,500,000 Lutheran Protestants. The total membership of the Free Churches in Berlin is between 5,000 and 6,000. The Baptists (Close) have six churches and eight ministers, the Methodists four churches and four ministers, Evangelische Gemeinschaft three churches and three ministers, and the

Free Evangelical Church (Open Baptists) three halls and two ministers.

It is believed that this Council in Berlin is only the nucleus of an organisation which will in no long time include all the Free Churches of the German Empire.

SCOTLAND.

There is a probability that at an early date the Federation Movement will make itself felt North of the Tweed. During the past year the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church have united, making a very strong body with a membership of nearly half a million. The Established Church (as long as it is established) is, of course, an insuperable obstacle to complete Presbyterian Union in Scotland. Organic union for the moment is impossible, but a proposal for the Federation of the Scottish Churches has been discussed by the Glasgow Established Church Presbytery. The debate was interesting and conducted in a good spirit. The Federation idea, though it was regarded as premature, received a considerable amount of support. Perhaps the most notable speech was that of Professor Cooper, who may now be regarded as the typical Scottish High Churchman. He professed himself enthusiastic for union on spiritual lines, but against Federation as a half-measure falling short of the ideal of our Lord. Dr. Forrest, of Skelmorlie, in an able letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, replied to Dr. Cooper, and his contentions were supported by Dr. Mair, of Earlston, a leading Established Churchman. The proposal for Federation of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches is likely to come before the next General Assembly of the Established Church in May.

A Proposal for Federation.

A further remarkable evidence of the growth of the spirit of unity was the publication of a call to prayer for visible unity amongst Christian people, signed by leading representatives of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Established Church of Scotland, and the United Free Church of Scotland. To

A Prayer for Unity.

Bishop Wilkinson of St. Andrews (formerly Bishop of Truro) the chief credit of the new movement belonged. There were 31 influential signatures to the appeal. Three bishops, four ex-moderators, two university professors, two M.P.s, and one Lord Provost were among them, and to name only a few other outstanding men of weight—Dr. Cameron Lees, Dr. Hastings, of the Bible Dictionary, Dr. Stalker, Dr. John Smith, Principal Salmond, and Dr. Wallace Williamson.

OUR MISSIONERS.

Our movement from the beginning has been pre-eminently spiritual, and, in particular, evangelistic. During the past year the missioners of the National Council, Gipsy Smith and Mr. W. R. Lane, have laboured with even greater success than has been bestowed upon them, by the blessing of God, during any former year. The congregations have been larger, the number of inquirers has been greater, and the effect upon the churches, in the quickening and deepening of their spiritual life, has never been more marked. The demand for the services of Gipsy Smith and Mr. Lane has been much greater than the National Council has been at all able to meet. In the summer the Rev. J. Tolefree Parr will become one of the Council's missioners, and it is believed confidently that the future will inevitably bring a large development in this branch of our work. The evangelistic activity of our Councils, of course, means a great deal more than the missions of Gipsy Smith and Mr. Lane. Practically all the Councils are engaged in evangelistic work of some sort. The harmony of the churches has been refreshing to witness, and great ingatherings of souls have been the result. In all parts of the country, and particularly in the rural districts, local preachers, members of the Christian Endeavour Societies, and similar organisations, have rendered great help in evangelistic work, especially that conducted in the open-air. The Councils throughout the country have never forgotten for a moment that their great work is the evangelising of England.

Gipsy Smith.

Gipsy Smith has conducted missions in the following towns during the year: Sowerby Bridge, Taunton, Bacup, Worthing, Bath, Rawtenstall, Croydon, Dulwich, Plymouth, Rotherham, Luton, Lincoln, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Birmingham, and Cheltenham.

Most lengthy and glowing reports have come to hand from all quarters. The following brief extracts may be interesting:—

Rev. C. E. Stone, Luton, writes:—

"The weather was of the worst description, but night after night the numbers increased and overflow meetings had to be held. Over 1,000 persons passed through the inquiry-rooms during the ten days. The mission took a strong hold of the young life of the town. Boys and girls were among the first to enter the inquiry-rooms, and to the last the child might be seen side by side with the middle-aged and the old. The mission has left a pure, a deep, and abiding impression on the town."

Rev. J. P. Perkins, Worthing, writes:—

"The theatre, our largest building, was packed at most of the services. Worthing was never so stirred before. 191 persons passed through the inquiry-room, people of all churches, and of none. A young clergyman came several nights, bringing his Boys' Brigade with him. Many visitors were impressed, and to Buxton and other places we sent names of inquirers."

Rev. W. H. Matthews, Sowerby Bridge, writes:—

"Over 200 persons passed through the inquiry-room, and the greater number have united themselves to the churches, which have been permanently strengthened by the mission."

Rev. F. A. Jackson, Lincoln, writes:—

"The meetings were held in Wesley Chapel, the largest chapel in the city, seating about 1,500 persons. At the first meeting, which was for workers, upwards of 500 friends met to welcome the missioner. From the first the big chapel was crowded, many being unable to get in on the closing evenings. 580 names of inquirers were received. All the Free Church ministers of the city joined heartily in sympathy and service. There is new life in many of our churches, and the long dearth of conversions is a thing of the past."

Rev. Edward Francis, Devonport, writes:—

"It was a truly wonderful success. The Guildhall—the largest public building in the three towns—was filled to overflowing at every service, and if it had been twice as large again it would not have been too large for the multitudes who were eager to enter in. Between 300 and 400 persons entered the inquiry-room, and almost every church in the three towns will increase its membership in consequence. Complete preparation had been made for the mission. The faith and enthusiasm of multitudes of believers were strengthened."

Mr. James Ogden, Bacup, writes:—

"It had been arranged that the mission should be held in the most central public hall, but its inadequacy was proved on the first day, and arrangements were at once made to secure

Mount Pleasant Wesleyan Chapel, where 1,500 people have assembled on very special occasions, and this place was not found too large. The services on the second Sunday, and also the Monday lecture, when Gipsy Smith related the story of his life, were held in Ebenezer Baptist Chapel; 230 persons entered the inquiry-room, including individuals connected with every church in the town (three belonging to the Establishment). About 30 young men have grouped themselves into a mission band, and, under the leadership of some minister, have held out-door services during the summer months; and are now holding cottage prayer-meetings. Since the Mission a united prayer-meeting has been held each Saturday evening at one or other of the chapels in the town, as many as 200 being present, the majority young people. For the special benefit of the young men, and at their request, a room has just been engaged as a rallying centre, in which they will meet once or twice a week for the purpose of spiritual instruction and prayer, and are to be met by one of the ministers. The most important result of the Mission is the undoubted blessing which the churches received as a whole. There is evidence on every hand that lasting results were accomplished."

Mr. C. Archer writes, in reference to Gipsy Smith's mission at Dulwich:—

"From the first day of his appearance large crowds gathered, and as the services proceeded every available space was occupied. On the last day as many persons went away unable to obtain admission, as there were packed inside the buildings; 366 persons passed through the inquiry-room. Upwards of 40 persons have been admitted to the fellowship of Emmanuel Congregational Church, where the mission was held."

Mr. H. Greenoff, Rawtenstall, writes:—

"From the first the missioner won the hearts of the people by his simple, earnest, and powerful speaking; 276 persons passed through the inquiry-rooms, and many more professed to have received good. Never shall I forget the scene in the inquiry-rooms—fathers greeting their grown-up sons, full of joy at seeing their prayers answered in the conversion of their children, friend greeting friend for whom he or she had wrestled in prayer. Many young people from our Sunday schools made decision for Christ."

Rev. John F. Parmiter, Rotherham, writes:—

"370 persons went into the inquiry-room. Almost all these had some sort of connection with the churches of the neighbourhood. They were attendants at the churches, or they had been and had fallen away, or they were members of the churches, or they belonged to the Sunday schools, or to the senior classes. The very large proportion consisted of young people. But there were inquirers who had no connection with the churches at all. The greatest effect was the religious quickening the mission gave to the churches."

Mr. W. P. Workman, M.A., Bath, writes:—

"The preparatory prayer meetings left the churches expectant of the blessing which was abundantly manifested in the actual mission. More than 350 inquirers found their way into the inquiry-room and many of these have been added to the Church."

Mr. T. C. Sanderson, Taunton, writes:—

"The United Mission (April 29th to May 7th) to which the ministers and members of the Free Churches of our town were eagerly looking forward, has been a much greater blessing than the most sanguine expected, although our hopes had been raised high by the reports of missions conducted by Gipsy Smith.

It was most pleasing to see the Temple Chapel packed each night tighter and tighter, until on the last Sunday evening 1,500 persons must have entered a building adapted to seat 1,100, and even then hundreds of disappointed persons had to be turned away.

The full result of the mission we shall never know; 329 persons passed the inquiry-rooms, and besides these I have heard of many others who decided for Christ. On the first Sunday evening 13 resolved to give themselves to the service of Christ, and the number nightly increased until on Friday our ministers and workers had the joy of dealing with 85 anxious souls.

The mission brought the workers of our churches together, and gave them to realize more fully the power of unity in spiritual work; most of these also received blessing while seeking a blessing for others. Truly the Lord will be a debtor to no man.

After the mission, Mr. Gipsy Smith was invited to meet the ministers at their Fraternal, when he gave helpful suggestions for the following up of the work which he had begun, and these are being put into practice by the various churches.

On Monday evening Mr. Smith gave a lecture, the title of which was 'From Gipsy Tent to Pulpit,' and though admission was by 1s. and 6d. tickets, long before the advertised time the Temple was well filled, and for nearly two hours the large assembly listened to the lecturer with great interest."

Mr. W. B. Lane. During the year Mr. Lane has conducted missions in the following towns: — Stockton, Bridgwater, Pontypridd, Ashford, Hereford, Guildford, Newbury, Heywood, Shrewsbury, Carlisle, Wakefield, Guernsey, Rochester, Barnsley, London, Hull, and Altrincham. The following are a few extracts from communications received from Secretaries of Councils in reference to these missions:

Mr. W. B. Redmayne, Carlisle, writes:—

"The Drill Hall, the largest hall in this city, was used throughout for the meetings, and on several occasions numbers were turned away, unable to get even standing room. Probably never before has such a meeting been held in Carlisle, as on the second Sunday afternoon, when some 1,500 men assembled at the meeting for *men only.* The spiritual life of the churches was deeply stirred. The afternoon Bible readings also showed, by the large numbers attending, the deep interest that had been aroused."

Rev. I. P. Thimann, A.T.S., Ashford, writes:—

"The spirit of hope and prayerfulness and Christian concord that pervaded the Churches was a means of much quickening and abiding good to the Churches. They are now banded together into a cohesive aggressive spiritual force, ready to spend its united energies in any reasonable effort for extension of our Master's sway over the hearts of men."

Rev. Herbert Trotman, Bridgwater, writes:—

"We secured the Town Hall for the meetings, and at each service we had a large attendance. Mr. Lane's addresses were very powerful. Mr. Lane's meeting for *men only* was a special feature of the mission, and more than justified all the efforts that were made to secure its success. About forty persons professed conversion."

Mr. Thomas W. Turner, Newbury, writes:—

"All the churches have received additions to their fellowship."

Rev. W. L. Tweedie, Stockton-on-Tees, writes:—

"Striking features were the prominence given to old-fashioned foundation truths, and the absence of any attempt to force men and women into the inquiry-room. The last Sunday afternoon's meeting, for men only, was probably the largest meeting of men ever held in Stockton. We cannot doubt that the whole town will feel the effects of it in after days, and that the moral tone of the community will be sensibly raised as a result."

Rev. E. W. Tarbox, Guildford, writes:—

"The Mission was exceedingly well attended, and accomplished much good. Many were brought to decision, and believers were greatly refreshed."

Rev. W. Lewis, Pontypridd, writes:—

"Mr. Lane's mission proved a great blessing to the town. Previous to it a house-to-house visitation had been made. The new Town Hall, which holds 1,200, was crowded on several occasions. Never shall I forget the Sunday afternoon service for men only. It was a grand sight. I am confident that hundreds of young men were blessed in that meeting, and that it left abiding results. Several joined the various churches of the town, and in addition to that, Mr. Lane's powerful, pointed and earnest addresses affected professed Christians very much, and improved the tone of our churches."

Rev. D. T. Patterson, Heywood, writes:—

"Between 70 and 80 persons passed through the inquiry-room, and the most of them are with us in our churches. The ministers and members of our churches were helped and revived."

Mr. Thomas Cooper, Shrewsbury, writes:—

"The services were held in St. John's Hill Wesleyan Church until the increased attendance as the mission advanced made it necessary to migrate to more commodious premises, the Congregational Church, Abbey Foregate. The largest hall in the town was secured for the lime-light lecture on 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' which was crowded, many being unable to obtain admission. The same may be said of the two last meetings held in Abbey Foregate Church. The mission has been a great blessing. It has brought joy and gladness to the hearts of the ministers, Sunday School teachers, and other Christian workers."

THE TESTIMONY OF THE MISSIONERS.

I.—GIPSY SMITH.

My first word shall be one of praise and thanksgiving to God who called me—"*me* who am less than the least of all saints"—to the ministry of the Gospel of His dear Son. "Bless the Lord, O my soul"; and had I the ear of all the churches I would say, "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together, sing unto the Lord, for He *hath done* excellent things; this is known in all the earth." When the leaders of the Free Churches called me to be their first missioner, they conferred great honour upon me, and gave me the widest field possible, and I would have them know this is their work, and God is greatly blessing it. I never had such crowds to preach to, and never saw so many and such hopeful results. Thousands this year have turned to God. Then I would like to thank those ministers and churches who have so nobly co-operated with me in making the year, under the blessing of God, such a victory for the cross.

My next word is one of gratitude to the General Organising Secretary for the wisdom and discretion displayed in arranging my missions in the centres which give me the largest opportunity possible, and also for the kind thought and care for my health and comfort. May I ask for the continued prayers of my brethren that I may be *kept where* my master can use me even more abundantly.

II.—Mr. W. R. Lane.

It has been in very deed a good year, full of blessing and encouragement; none more so I think since my association with Free Church Council work. The awakening and blessing has in some places been quite remarkable. I think, however, that in almost all cases the blessing enjoyed was just in proportion to the careful and practical attention which was given to all the details of preparation, and especially to the earnestness of united prayer. I want especially to thank God for the magnificent crowds of men at the "special talk to men only," which we hold on the second Sunday afternoon of all my missions. In almost every place the largest available building is filled; and it is no unusual sight to see 1,600 or 1,800 men gathered together. This affords a grand and solemn opportunity for reaching the manhood of the community and of urging upon them the necessity and the power for personal and social purity; and it brings me naturally into very close touch with young men, large numbers of whom have testified, thank God, to the blessing and help received. These men's meetings are, moreover, emphatically the great chance of reaching crowds of non church-going men that it seems impossible to get to come to the ordinary services of the mission. I believe that often forty or fifty per cent. of them are men of this description. For all the blessing given with the evangilising message; and for all the brotherly and hearty co-operation and fellowship of multitudes of pastors and their helpers, and for all the sympathy and help of praying people everywhere, I desire from my heart to thank God and take courage.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

The Annual Meetings of the local Councils are always the occasion of great public demonstrations in behalf of Free Church work and principles. During the past year these gatherings have continued to be an important and useful feature of the work of the Councils. There is no other way by which the Councils can so effectively proclaim to the world the principles for which they are fighting, and the work that they are doing. These meetings have almost everywhere been very successful. During the past year they were directed mainly towards helping on the preparations for the Simultaneous Mission.

The last twelve months have not afforded the occasions for great public demonstrations organised by the National Council. But the Council organised the National Memorial Service for the Queen in the City Temple on February 2nd. The great building was crowded by a hushed and reverent audience, over which the Rev. C. H. Kelly, the President of the National Council, presided. Brief and impressive addresses were delivered by Dr. Guinness Rogers and Dr. Clifford. The others who took part included Dr. Monro Gibson, Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., Rev. John McNeill, and the Rev. Silas K. Hocking.

A large number of our leaders have given to the Federation Movement practically all the time they could spare from their regular work. The National Council and the Free Churches are under a great debt of gratitude to them, and here in their name we have to acknowledge and thank them for their invaluable services.

THE VISITS OF THE EX-PRESIDENT.

The President for the year, the Rev. C. H. Kelly, who has not been a whit behind his predecessors in zeal and activity, has preached or attended meetings at Sandy (Beds.), Keighley, Sheffield, Whitby, Wandsworth, Horsham, Christchurch, Lambeth, Colchester, Blackburn, Yarmouth, Doncaster, Belper, Rushden, Widnes, Chester, Stockport, Luton, Shrewsbury, Chatham, Grimsby, Retford, Hull, Gosport, Huddersfield, Leeds, Blackpool, Liverpool, Cardiff, Dudley, Bradford, Rugby, Torquay, Batley, Mansfield, Kendal, London (various). He has given us his impressions in the following words:—

Impressions.

"The afternoon congregations have often been large, and the meetings for the most part have been well attended. It has been pleasant to see so many earnest young men present. The spiritual tone has been most satisfactory. The Conventions and other services have fostered brotherly feeling. Undoubtedly the movement is spreading rapidly and healthily. Here and there we find apathy, and now and then hostility, but that is so with reference to most good causes. I have been struck with the marked ability of several local speakers. They could render splendid service on any platform. When one hears many of the younger Free Church ministers my heart is gladdened. God has not only found a great movement for the future in our National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, but He is raising up men who will work it well."

THE VISITS OF THE GENERAL ORGANISING SECRETARY.

The General Organising Secretary of the National Council has, during the year, visited the following among other places: Frodsham, Ripon, Leicester, Cardiff, Bridgend, Neath, Swansea, Birmingham, Croydon, Barnstaple, Brighton, Newport, Leeds, King's Lynn, Liverpool, Manchester, Weston-super-Mare, Yarmouth, Gosport, Portsmouth, Ashford, Bolton, Penrith, Newark, Cambridge, Scarborough, Paris, Hull, Oldham, Bradford, Staines, Aberavon, Merthyr, Liskeard, Hayle, Nelson, Blackheath, Hartlepool, Whitby, Leek, Woolwich, Oxford, Hanley, Milford Haven, Wigan, Blackburn, Redditch, Twickenham, Hastings, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Folkestone, Plymouth, Exeter, Halifax, Croydon, Dulwich, Wellingborough, and Lincoln. Many of these places have been visited frequently during the year.

THE FREE CHURCH PAROCHIAL SYSTEM.

South Manchester.

We are pleased to report that an increasing number of Councils are adopting the Free Church Parochial System with the most blessed results. The preparations for the Simultaneous Mission included, in practically every case, house-to-house visitation, made sometimes three, sometimes even four times. Many Councils besides have included this work in their ordinary programme for the year. The information gained is of the greatest importance to the churches in the prosecution of their work for the souls of men. In South Manchester, for example, the results for 13,000 houses which were visited by 21 churches can be set out, 4,530 houses are reported as attached to one or other of the Evangelical Free Churches, 3,830 to the Established, and 880 to the Roman Catholic Church, while 190 belong to other churches than those named. That is, 9,430 profess to belong to some section of the Church. It will be seen that in the area, those said to be in association with the Evangelical Free Churches out-number those of the Established Church by 700, and those of the Roman Catholic order by 3,650.

At 1,940 houses it was stated that they did not attend any church, while from 450 the occupiers go anywhere. In 810 cases either an answer to the inquiries was refused or that given was very unsatisfactory. Put all these figures together, and we have the result that in the district visited there are 3,200 houses wherein there is no interest on the part of the parents in any place of worship or where the connection is slight.

With one consent the reports say that those engaged in the visiting have been strongly impressed with the manifest indifference with which religion is regarded. This is very markedly shown by the fact that so large a number without any hesitation disclaim any religious interest. No doubt the number of the non-church goers is in reality somewhat larger than that stated.

Only three cases of avowed atheists were encountered.

The Free Churches in South Manchester could not receive a greater stimulus in their work than this reminder of the great amount of territory which has still to be covered and conquered for Christ. A great many Councils have undertaken just the same work as South Manchester. The Leeds Council in particular is going into the matter with the most complete thoroughness.

The Idea of the System.

The Free Church Parochial System is simply house-to-house visitation made constant and permanent. The Free Church, to which a certain district is assigned, becomes responsible for that district, for the social, moral, and spiritual condition of the inhabitants. All sorts of "parish" work should be undertaken, including the nursing of the sick by Free Church Sisters. The Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, said recently, that if the Free Church Council movement had done nothing but institute the Free Church Parochial System, that new departure, in his judgment, would have more than justified its existence. The whole of England, divided into Free Church Parishes, just as it is at present divided into Legal and Anglican Parishes—that is the ideal of the leaders of the Federation movement, and they will not rest content until it has been realised. Nor until this has been done will the Free Churches have properly appreciated the work that they are called upon to do in this realm.

Mr. Cadbury's offer of £5 to each Council of more than fifteen churches (and from £2 to £3 to smaller Councils)—an offer first made in March, 1897—is still gratefully taken advantage of, and suitable maps of Free Church parishes are prepared. A map showing the position and boundary of each Free Church is of great service.

In the house-to-house visitation, which is, of course, an essential preliminary, and part of the Free Church Parochial System, it is advisable to supplement the usual circulars, giving a list of ministers, churches, the times of service, &c., with some popular publication, a localised magazine, or a special up-to-date tract, which shall at once arouse the interest and attention of the indifferent. The Anglicans have long realised the value of the localised magazine in working the Parish System. It is believed that one of the best results of the Simultaneous Mission will be the more general adoption of the Parochial System.

A FREE CHURCH EVANGELIST IN EVERY VILLAGE.

Schedules of questions have been sent out to all the Councils and Federations with a view to ascertaining the provision that is made by the Free Churches in the villages of our land. A great deal of interesting and valuable information has come to hand which will be found very helpful when practical steps come to be taken. Dr. Mackennal, the Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, and others, have taken a very special interest in this matter. The ideal is that there should be a Free Church minister or evangelist in every village in the country, or at least within three miles of every village. The scheme it is expected will be put into operation first by the Sussex Federation, which has the good fortune of possessing Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., as its President. A thorough inquiry into the state of things in the villages of Sussex is about to be made immediately, and at its conclusion immediate steps will be taken to supply any deficiencies in the way of Free Church provision that may be found to exist. The experience of Sussex will doubtless be an invaluable guide and inspiration to the other Federations.

We often hear of the evils of overlapping, and these in some rural districts of England are very real; but a far more serious evil is to be found in the fact that there are hundreds and hundreds of villages in England without any Free Church cause at all. These villages are frequently given over to priestism and landlordism. This proposal to provide a Free Church Ministry practically for the whole of rural England is one of the most audacious yet made by the new Free Church movement, and it cannot be expected that it will be quickly carried out on a national scale, but we believe the Federated Churches have it in their heart and power to accomplish this ultimately.

WORK FOR THE VILLAGES.

Practically all town Free Church Councils have extended their boundaries in order to include the neighbouring villages. The idea is that the strength of the town churches should come to the aid of the village causes, many of which are weak and struggling, and the members of which are frequently subject to landlordism and priestly tyranny. The chief work of some of the Councils has been the care and visitation of the villages. Let us take the case of the Ashford Council, Kent, as illustrating the kind of help that the town Councils are giving to the villages.

Ashford.

There are 21 village churches in connection with the Ashford Council. The widely-extended area over which these villages are spread, many of them being in addition inaccessible by rail, renders work for them specially difficult. Besides, during the summer months and the light evenings, most of the men are engaged in the gardens, and consequently much of the work has to be done when the roads are in their worst condition. It ought to be very encouraging to other Councils to know what, in spite of such difficulties, has been accomplished.

The Secretary of the Ashford Council (Rev. I. P. Thimann), writes:—

Free Church Lectures.

"We set ourselves the task to impart some instruction in a much-needed direction, and accordingly we delivered magic-lantern lectures in most of the places on 'The Struggle for Religious Liberty.' We secured a gratuitous loan for a lengthened period of a magnificent set of slides, which proved a great delight to the countryfolk, and, while the pictures were heartily enjoyed, the information imparted left impressions which cannot easily be forgotten. To most of these audiences the main facts in the history of the conflict for religious freedom were a startling revelation, judging from the expressions accompanying their utterances of appreciation and gratitude.

The question of the travelling expenses of the lecturers and operators was solved in a simple way. We printed a quantity of attractive skeleton bills, leaving some blank lines for date, name of place, and lecturer, to be filled in locally. We appointed the lecturers from among the members of our Council; we guaranteed carriage of the slides and conveyance of the lecturers, and only asked for a collection at the close. We were prepared at the end to make up any possible deficit out of the funds of our exchequer. But we found that all the collections taken together just comfortably covered our expenses, leaving us even a little surplus.

Evangelistic Work.

We resolved to help some of our villages in local evangelistic efforts. We secured the services for a few weeks of Mr. and Mrs. Gipsy Smith, sen. (who are admirably adapted for this kind of work, and assist each other splendidly, the Gipsy conducting the meetings generally, and his wife, an ex-captain of the Salvation Army, singing solos or speaking in a sympathetic way to some of the more serious-minded people in their pews, is especially useful in addressing children). We then allocated our evangelists for a few days' or a week's mission to as many village chapels as were anxious to secure them. Judging from the reports that reached us from some of these villages, the results were very encouraging.

The problem of the finances here was rather a knotty one, but has been solved in this way: Our town Council provided the missioners, paid their expenses and printed all bills, and no other burden was thrown upon the local chapels than to give a collection for every service taken by them, and where possible to entertain them. On Sundays we also allowed one collection to go in aid of the local chapel. The experiment worked admirably, we found that the collections supplemented each other, and taken together completely met our liabilities.

It was only an experiment, but the experience we have thus gained we hope to utilise when we make our next effort on a larger and more comprehensive scale, and when, we believe, we shall be able still further to improve the financial aspect of the question to the advantage of the village chapels.

We were enabled, through the kindness of a friend, to supply our village chapels with a batch of New Year's greeting cards of a most appropriate and beautiful design, with space for announcing the times of regular local services, and in quantities sufficient to reach every house in the parish. In this way the local Free Church in the village was once again brought under the sympathetic notice of almost every resident, and its services and Sunday school advertised in every home."

Mr. Thimann, of course, wrote before the Simultaneous Mission. Nevertheless, it may be helpful for the future that other Councils should know what steps were taken to evangelise the villages near Ashford during that campaign. "We purpose enlisting," wrote Mr. Thimann, "all our local ministers and some of our leading and most successful lay preachers, and turn them into a band of missioners to proclaim in every village at the same time the old, old, and ever-new story of Jesus and His undying love. Further to lay no burden whatever upon our village churches, we hope to do all the necessary printing for them, and as to conveying the missioners, we hope to invite those of our preachers who are skilled in the art of mounting the 'hub' to indulge in a spin there and back in the same evening, and, for those whose weight of sound divinity forbids them the luxury of entrusting themselves to the fleeting wheel, to secure the loan of conveyances there and back the same evening. The expenses of printing and advertising we hope to defray by a thank-offering collection to be taken on the last evening of the mission.

Simultaneous Mission Work.

We want our brave village friends to feel that they have not to trouble themselves about finding one penny towards the expenses of this mission, so that they may throw all their

> minds and souls into one great, prayerful, and enthusiastic effort to lead their fellows to Christ."

We have dealt with the case of Ashford at length, because it shows what splendid service can be rendered to the villages by the Council of a small town. The population of Ashford is 12,000.

We might multiply instances of the service that is being done for the villages. Take this for example:

Chetton.

> A few Nonconformist families have settled at Chetton, a village about four miles from Bridgnorth, and have commenced Sunday services and also a Sunday-school. They have asked Bridgnorth Council to supply them with preachers, and this the Council has gladly consented to do. The attendance on Sunday evening is between 30 and 40. This is a good illustration of one way, out of many, in which the Councils can help the villages.

The need for the Movement in the Villages.

There is no doubt that many of the villages have derived many substantial advantages from the Federation movement. It is equally certain than many villages are still in need of its helping hand. The Rev. W. J. Robins, of Cockfield, made some remarkable statements at a meeting of the Bury St. Edmund's Council. Mr. Robins has been pastor at Cockfield for upwards of ten years. He said:

Ignorance of Nonconformist Principles.

> "I deeply regret to say that many of my own members fail to understand the principles of Nonconformity. Young men and young women of my congregation who have been trained in the Sabbath school do not consider the Dissenting Church the proper place for them to get married in, and repair to the Established Church.
>
> When a child is born they, members of a Nonconformist Church, carry that child to the Church of England to be baptised there, and the people themselves stand as godfathers and godmothers. Members of my own church also allow their children, who have been trained in our Sunday schools, to go away and be confirmed in the rites of the Church of England. It seems to me that the Free Church Federation has come into existence for the express purpose of putting a stop to this kind of thing, and of showing the rising generation the gross mistake they are making by such conduct.

The Conscience Clause Dead.

> There is another matter which requires energetic effort on the part of the Federation—the matter of education and the work of the conscience clause. At Cockfield we have a population of about nine hundred and thirty according to the last census. The Sunday school in connection with my church is attended by about one

hundred children, the majority of whom attend the only school in the village, namely, the National School. Yet there is not a single child in that school exempt from the Anglican Catechism. Not a single father dares, or has dared, to put the conscience clause into force. It is impossible for our Sunday school teachers, who have the children under their care for only about an hour and a half during the whole week, to instil principles into their minds which are being uprooted the very next day and for the remaining five days in the National School.

The Free Church Council is greatly needed in our villages. It seems to me that the Federation has been called into existence to assist us to fight our battles in the villages."

THE FREE CHURCH GIRLS' GUILD.

Our Secretaries throughout the country have for the most part found full employment for all their energies in the work of organising the Simultaneous Mission. The General Organising Secretary received a large number of letters from Secretaries stating that they found it impossible to work two such large schemes as the Simultaneous Mission and the Free Church Girls' Guild at the same time. The General Committee of the National Council, fully recognising the force of these statements, resolved that, while keeping the matter of the Guild before them, the work of thoroughly organising it should not be taken in hand until the conclusion of the Simultaneous Mission. Moreover, the Committee thought it very desirable that each year the movement should be directed towards some great specific work.

Accordingly the Girls' Guild during this year will have the first place on the programme of the National Council, and will be given the prominence which during last year was attached to the Simultaneous Mission. The most detailed help will be given by the Central Office to the local Councils. Several local Councils have already taken steps towards forming Girls' Guild branches.

During the past year a deputation from the National Council has conferred with the officials of the Young Women's Christian Association, and a deputation from the Young Women's Christian Association, headed by Lord Kinnaird, has been received by the General Committee of the National Council. From the beginning it has been felt by the General Committee and the National Council that the Free Churches should possess a distinct organisation for the work of banding together the Free Church girls of the country. But in places where such organisations as the Young Women's Christian Association, Dr. Stephenson's Girl's Helpful Society, the Metropolitan Association for befriending Young Servants, or the like exist, the local Committees in connection with Free Church Councils are

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advised to avail themselves of their co-operation as far as may be found helpful, and introduce members to their agencies.

TEMPERANCE WORK.

Vigilant observation of the Local Administration of the Licensing Laws, opposing applications for new licences at the Brewster Sessions, and agitating for reforms in the existing laws—these are of course important planks in the programme of all the Councils. Practically every Council does Brewster Sessions work and does it with conspicuous success. Mr. Joseph Rowntree, of York, joint-author with Mr. Arthur Sherwell of the famous and epoch-making volume, "The Temperance Problem and Social Reform," has addressed many of the Councils, expounding and advocating the proposals of his volume. Mr. Rowntree's services have always been much appreciated, and have always succeeded in increasing interest in the tremendously important problem with which the volume deals. Further, practically all the Councils have adopted resolutions demanding legislation on the lines of Lord Peel's Report, and it is unquestionable that when the time arrives the promoters of a Bill embodying Lord Peel's proposals, will receive a very powerful backing from the Free Church Councils. The National Council appointed the following representatives to a National Conference on Lord Peel's Report held at Manchester on February 12th: Revs. H. P. Hughes, M.A., Dr. Mackennal, the General Organising Secretary, C. F. Aked, Dr. Randles, Dr. Townsend, J. Tolefree Parr, Mr. David Shepherd, Mr. Alderman Snape, Alderman Duckworth, J.P., and Mr. J. Bamford Slack, B.A. The Conference represented all the temperance organisations of the country, and unanimously resolved to agitate for legislation on the lines of Lord Peel's Report.

We may note a few specially interesting items of temperance work, merely as specimens by way of indicating the kind of work the Councils are doing.

Lancaster's Licensing Litigation.

The Lancaster Council is fighting a curious licensing case, which is worth special notice. The Council, at the adjourned Brewster Sessions, opposed applications for two new licences. One was refused. The other was granted. This second one was again opposed when brought up for confirmation. The bench was composed of eleven members. The Mayor declared the licence granted. The Council, on making inquiries, found that two members on the bench did not vote, that four opposed the licence, and five voted for it. Counsel's opinion was sought. It was to the effect that a licence must be granted by a vote of a majority of magistrates on the bench entitled to vote. The Mayor refused to give an affidavit as to the voting, but this the senior magistrate granted. Application has now been made to the Court of King's Bench for a writ to quash the licence, and failing that a mandamus to rehear the case.

Other interesting Points.

Guernsey Council defeated an attempt made in the local Legislative Chamber to open some hotels on Sundays. Exeter Council secured a very notable temperance triumph. "As in the City of Exeter," writes the Secretary, "we have had the scandal of the Watch Committee dominated by the Drink Traffic, with a leading brewer as the Chairman, it was thought desirable to memorialise the newly elected Council of Greater Exeter on the matter, asking that in the election of the Watch Committee, all persons interested in the trade should be excluded. *Not a person connected with the Drink Traffic is now on the Watch Committee.*" Jersey Council has secured a total revision of the law in the island in reference to strong drink. Hitherto, there has been practically Free Trade in drink. The number of licences is now being much reduced. King's Lynn Council received the thanks of the Chief Constable for co-operation in the administration of the licensing laws. Rochdale Council successfully opposed an attempt to transfer a licence in the possession of the Corporation, which they had bargained to sell on condition that £3,000 was paid for it. The Shirebrook Council offered a successful opposition to an application for a licence for a new hotel or so-called Market Hall, and an application for a permanent extension of hours allowed for the sale of drink. Colwyn Bay Council (English section) opposed the granting of a licence for the Pier Pavilion. The local justices allowed the claim, but the Council again opposed it, and this time with success before the confirming justices. Mr. Ellis Jones Griffith, M.P., was briefed for the Council. Peterborough Council successfully opposed an application by the manager of a brickyard for a provisional licence in respect of an hotel which he proposed to erect near his works, where a thousand men are employed.

MID-DAY SERVICES IN LIVERPOOL.

The Liverpool Council has inaugurated what has proved to be no insignificant addition to the life of the city. A series of mid-day Thursday services has been commenced. A central city church has been secured for the services; large and influential congregations, consisting chiefly of city merchants and business men, have assembled week by week, and the leading preachers of the various Free Churches have visited Liverpool for these meetings. Rev. W. L. Watkinson preached the opening sermon, and was followed by such well-known leaders in Free Church Life as Rev. Professor Ellis Edwards of Bala, Rev. John Hunter, D.D., Rev. C. H. Kelly, Rev. Silas K. Hocking, Rev. W. T. Davison, D.D., Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, Rev. George Jackson, B.A., and Rev.

G. Campbell Morgan. This is the first series of such services ever held in the city, and the first occasion, we believe, on which this work has been undertaken by a Free Church Council. In the heart of the city this quiet mid-day hour in the sanctuary where the roar of the city life is hushed, has come to be valued, and it is hoped to make the services a permanent factor in Liverpool life. Other cities, such as Bradford and Manchester, have similar mid-day Free Church Services, but not directly in connection with the local Council.

Evening meetings have been held at Liverpool weekly, on the same day as the mid-day service, and central churches in various districts have been placed for the purpose at the service of the Council. At these services Revs. W. L. Watkinson, Dr. Davison, and George Jackson have preached special sermons, and lectures on subjects of interest and help to Free Churchmen have been delivered by Revs. Dr. John Hunter, S. K. Hocking, and J. G. Greenhough, while mass meetings preparatory to the Simultaneous Mission have been addressed by Rev. C. H. Kelly, Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, and local ministers.

LECTURES TO LOCAL PREACHERS.

The lectures delivered by the Rev. W. D. McLaren, M.A., to local preachers have been greatly appreciated. For instance, one Secretary writes :—

> "Free Church Councils, in connection with which there are any number of lay-preachers, could hardly render their churches a greater service than by inviting Mr. McLaren to deliver to them a course of lectures. He is pre-eminently a teacher of teachers."

Mr. McLaren, who is a nephew of the famous Manchester divine. Dr. McLaren, has the recommendation of the National Council. His work is earnestly commended to the attention of the District Federations, which might conveniently arrange for a series of lectures in neighbouring towns (all the series being delivered in each town). Mr. McLaren's theme is the importance and best methods of private Bible study, and pulpit or class preparation. In view of the exigencies of the work, the lecturer, while happy to accept any extra sum when offered, makes no stipulated charge beyond expenses. These include, besides travelling expenses for the lecturer and for the amanuensis required by his partial blindness, the cost of apartments, *without* board, during the weeks occupied by the course.

Many Councils throughout the country have formed unions of lay-preachers and instituted courses of lectures for them. It is believed that the Councils could hardly be more fruitfully employed than in this way. The future of the Free Churches, especially in the rural districts, depends in no inconsiderable degree upon the devotion and the efficiency of our splendid army of lay-preachers.

ADVICE ON LEGAL QUESTIONS.

Letters raising all kinds of legal points as affecting the position of the Free Churches, and the working out of the schemes of the Councils, are constantly received at the Central Office. The National Council has a Legal Sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Percy Bunting, M.A., Mr. Herbert Lewis, M.P., Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., Mr. E. C. Rawlings, Mr. Robert Whyte, with Mr. J. Bamford Slack, B.A., as convener. Many of the questions asked were of such urgency that the General Committee decided to ask Mr. Slack to become Hon. Legal Adviser to the National Council. Mr. Slack accepted the position, and during the year has given much time to this work, and has rendered most valuable service which has been greatly appreciated.

THE RAILWAY COMPANIES AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

We referred to this matter in last year's report. Briefly the facts of the particular case now in controversy are :—The only elementary schools in one very populous district of Peterborough are the schools built by the Great Northern Railway Company. The company granted a lease of the schools to the vicar of the parish, with the condition that they should be conducted as the Church Schools of the parish. This is felt to be a Nonconformist grievance and a great public scandal.

The majority of the inhabitants of the district in question, called New England, are Nonconformists. Of the 750 (or thereabouts) children who attend these schools the majority are the children of Nonconformists. On Sunday 500 of them attend Nonconformist Sunday schools. The British Schools are some distance away and very full, and so these Nonconformist children are compelled to attend these schools which are under the control of the Church of England. The teachers are obliged to be members of the Church of England, or, at any rate, to attend the Church services. Yet the Church of England has not contributed one penny to the erection of the schools nor to their maintenance. According to the last balance-sheet, £1,292 came from public funds, and £212 from the Great Northern Railway Company. The company, which provides the premises and one sixth of the income, appoints the two sole local managers—one a railway official, and the other the Church of England clergyman. The inhabitants have no say in the matter at at. It is pointedly asked how came the directors of the company—a company which has among its shareholders men of different creeds—to favour one religious body more than another ? In short, what right have they to hand over their schools to the Church of England ? And, if one religious body had to be chosen, why should it be the Church of England when most of the inhabitants in the district are Nonconformists ?

A clear statement of the case has been made in a petition to the directors, signed by 511 "electors, householders, or parents of children resident" in the district. The petitioners "venture to suggest that the directors of the G.N.R. should in future insist that the local Committee of Management shall consist of at least five persons, two to be appointed by the G.N.R. Company and three by the residents of New England, every person upon the Municipal register having a right to vote for the three elected managers, who shall be chosen for three or five years." In our opinion nothing could be more reasonable than this proposal. A deputation, on which the Peterborough Free Church Council was represented, has waited upon the General Manager of the company. He received the members courteously, promised to make careful inquiry, and lay the whole matter before the Board of Directors. The Directors replied that they did not see their way to make any alteration in the management. At a public meeting, held to consider the reply, it was resolved to point out to the Board of Directors :—(1). That the present managers evade the New Education Act by charging returnable fees and cost of books; (2). That the children of Nonconformists have hitherto been at a great disadvantage in not being eligible as pupil teachers ; and (3) That whilst the school-rooms out of school times are always available for Church purposes, the Nonconformists and other bodies are not permitted to have them, and that on many occasions it would be a boon to the inhabitants if the schools were available after school hours, seeing that there is no public room of any kind in the neighbourhood.

Free Churchmen will not let this matter rest until it has been finally settled in the interest of justice and religious equality.

ANGLICAN TYRANNY.

We would not for a moment bring a general charge of persecution against the Anglican Church. But there is no doubt whatever that in the rural districts the Free Churches are regarded by the bigoted sacerdotalists as weeds and pests that must be rooted out and destroyed. The Federation movement has made open tyranny impossible, but petty persecution—not "petty" to those who are the victims of it—is practised still in many parts of the country. The Free Church Councils everywhere offer the most vigorous resistance to this. We believe that the linking of the villages with the town Free Church Councils will soon for ever put an end to the trouble. Exposure und publicity are what these parsons and squires who persecute Dissent most dislike.

We may mention here a few typical cases of the insults and suffering to which Free Churchmen, faithful to their conscience, are still liable.

How to Fight Tyranny.

How is this petty persecution to be brought to an end? The cases occur mostly in the villages, and this makes it so necessary that the villages should be linked closely with the Free Church Councils in the towns. The Secretary of the local Council should at once be informed of any case that has occurred, and an earnest attempt should be made to set the matter right privately. If this is unsuccessful, resort should be had to publicity. But it is necessary to be absolutely sure of the facts.

Turned Out of Home.

We have referred in our notice of the East Norfolk Federation to the case of Mr. Burrell Hammond, of Briston, who received notice from his landlord, Lord Hastings, to quit his farm. On October 16th his lordship wrote as follows:—"The reason you have received notice to quit is that I am anxious to have a tenant who would act on more friendly terms with his landlord, and also one not so hostile to the clergy and everything connected with the Church of England." As far as his tenancy is concerned, no complaint is made about neglect of the land or non-payment of rent. The real trouble was that Mr. Hammond was deacon of a Congregational Church, an acceptable local preacher, and a much sought after chairman for Free Church meetings.

The sin of attending a Free Church.

Edith Smith, a servant girl at Marlborough, was a candidate for confirmation. She regularly attended the vicar's preparatory classes. But one day, while there were still two classes to attend, she had occasion to take a letter from her mistress to the vicar. He asked her to kneel down and promise before God and him that she would not, after confirmation, enter any Nonconformist place of worship. She refused to do this, and her confirmation was not accomplished. Edith Smith's mistress was of High Church sympathies, and in consequence, it is said, of the girl's refusal to comply with the vicar's request, she had to leave her place.

Persecuting a Schoolboy.

A man and his wife came to a Wiltshire village to work for a local farmer. They attended the Primitive Methodist Chapel, but the children had to be sent to the Church day school, which was the only one available. The parents requested the exemption of their children from religious instruction on the mornings that the Catechism was taught, greatly to the astonishment and horror of the vicar and teachers, who had "never heard of people not wishing their children to be taught religion."

The eldest boy gained a prize in the usual examination (this prize, by the way, consisting of a prayer-book presented by the vicar); but on Saints' days, when the school was closed in order that the children might be taken to church, this boy was punished for the sin of his parents in exercising their rights, by being set to work to clean out the school "sanitary offices"! This happened on more than one occasion.

The Rev. James R. Cooper, Secretary of the Helston Council, has supplied us with the following:—

A Teacher Dismissed for being a Baptist.

> "My executive committee think it well that I should state a case that came under my own notice as pastor of both Helston and Hayle Baptist Churches. A young lady, a teacher in a National day-school, was led to seek membership with the Baptist Church. She made known her intention to the Canon, who spoke to her and gave her a pamphlet, telling her if she persisted in her determination, she must leave the school. Her father also said if she lost her situation she must leave her home. She could do no better than fulfil what she believed to be the will of her Lord, and was dismissed with a month's pay instead of notice. Another scholar in our Sunday school had to forsake both school and church in order to become a pupil teacher in the National school at Helston."

Yet these so-called National schools are supported almost entirely by public funds. How long will Englishmen tolerate iniquities such as these exposed in Mr. Cooper's letter?

Horrible Doctrine.

Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell has mentioned an extraordinary instance of clerical narrowness in a Nottinghamshire village. A girl of sixteen, wishing to become a pupil-teacher, was told by a clergyman that she could not unless she were baptised, and that God was not her Father until she was baptised in the Church. One night the poor little creature's brain became somewhat affected, and in her sleep she could be heard to mourn that God was not her Father. She was tossing on her bed in pain because that horrible doctrine had been drummed into her.

The Bishop of Truro challenged.

Can any such charges be proved against Nonconformists? The Bishop of Truro, addressing the Home Reunion Society, told a tale to illustrate the struggles of a dying Nonconformity! He said that he had recently been told by clergy of cases in which seven candidates for confirmation had been told they would be turned out of doors if they were confirmed. The Bishop has been invited by us to produce the evidence or authority upon which he made his statement, and the result is two private communications. It is surely fair comment to say that if the Bishop cannot give Nonconformists an opportunity of investigating cruel charges of this sort, he should not have made them.

SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON PROPOSED IRISH ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

A Conference of officers of Evangelical Free Church denominations and organisations was held at the Memorial Hall, on April 24th, to consider what action should be taken in reference to the proposed Roman Catholic University for Ireland. The Conference was convened by the officers of the National Council.

The Rev. C. H. Kelly, the President of the National Council, occupied the chair. Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., introduced the subject, and suggested the following resolution, which was moved by the Rev. Silas K. Hocking and seconded by the Rev. A. Rowland, LL.B., B.A., and carried unanimously:—

> "This Conference of representatives of the Evangelical Free Churches again places on record its strong conviction that the establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland, endowed out of public funds, would be a retrograde step, opposed also to the educational interests of the youth of Ireland, and to the principles of religious equality.
>
> Having regard to the declarations recently made in the House of Commons by Mr. Balfour, and the votes there given by several influential politicians, this Conference feels that the time has come when Nonconformist electors in the country should use their influence to prevent the adoption of any such measure."

The following resolution was also carried unanimously:—

> "This Conference recommends that a circular be forthwith addressed to every Member of Parliament and every candidate in England and Wales, forwarding a copy of the aforesaid resolution, and requesting to know, for the information of the Nonconformist electors, whether they are in favour of or against the establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland at the public expense."

These resolutions were submitted to the General Committee of the National Council, which unanimously adopted them.

THEATRE MISSIONS

During the Simultaneous Mission the gatherings held on Sunday evenings in the theatres were always among the most successful of the series. Reports have reached us from many quarters which abundantly prove this. There is no doubt that thousands of people have an invincible objection to entering churches. It is useless to say that their objection is absurd. Our business is to bring them within hearing of the Gospel.

The General Organising Secretary suggested to the General Committee the advisability of theatre services, after the regular services on Sunday evenings, becoming a part of the work of the Councils throughout the country. The Committee received the suggestion with favour, and decided that it should have the greatest possible publicity given to it, and that a reference should be made to it in this report. The idea is that the services should start at half-past eight or nine on Sunday evening, and that a special effort should be made to induce the promenaders of the streets to turn into this building for an hour or so that they may hear the Gospel. We could quote many instances of such services which have been conducted with great success.

MISSION VANS AND TENT SERVICES.

It has been suggested to the National Council Committee that the various mission vans now in use by various denominations throughout the country should be taken over by the National Council. It is felt in many quarters that work of this kind could be better done by an interdenominational body like the National Council than by any separate denomination. The matter received the sympathetic consideration of the General Committee, and while nothing definite has been done on account of the great pressure of other work and other engagements, and particularly of the Simultaneous Mission, it is probable that the matter will be taken up later. It is believed that these mission vans will prove very valuable evangelising agencies, especially in the rural districts of the country.

Tent services are at present held in some parts of London and the country. This work is at present carried on mainly by private enterprise. It is very strongly felt that work of this kind could be much more effectively done by local Councils. The General Committee of the National Council has had the matter under consideration, and definite steps will probably be taken in the desired direction shortly.

MINISTERS' CIRCLE OF PRAYER.

The Rev. Dr. Paton is the author of the idea of the ministers' Circle of Prayer. The proposal is that ministers everywhere should devote some portion of every Saturday evening to prayer for one another, for the purity, spirituality, and power of the Church of Christ, and for the coming of the Kingdom of God all over the world. The National Council Committee rejoiced in the offer of Dr. Paton to receive the names of those who may desire to enrol themselves, not to be published or made known, but to be kept in a register, and the signatories to receive a card of membership and such occasional papers as may be issued according as matters of spiritual importance and urgency may seem to require.

The National Council sent out a circular setting forth and commending the proposals of Dr. Paton's. It also commended the practice, which was adopted in the eighteenth century, of devoting a day at the beginning of each quarter of the year to special meditation upon the office of the Ministry in the Church, the October day being set apart as a quiet day of conference and prayer in preparation for the winter's work of the Church.

MISCELLANEOUS WORK DONE BY THE COUNCILS.

Almost all the Councils in the country have, to a certain extent, a common programme of work. Practically all of them conduct oper-air services, and carry out house-to-house visitation; many of them have the Free Church Parochical System in full working order, numbers of them are continually engaged in evangelistic work. Temperance and Brewster Sessions work, Free Church lectures, public meetings, workhouse and infirmary services, exchange of pulpits, united communion services, united prayer meetings—these are all part and parcel of the regular systematic work of the vast majority of the Councils. In the notes that follow we have only singled out points that seem to us of special interest, and these points must be taken simply as specimens and types, and not by any means as a complete record of the multifarious work that the Councils are doing.

KINGSTON Council successfully opposed the consecration of the new church at the Union.

SILVERDALE Council has undertaken to work the local branch of the Bible Society. The State Church here refuses to work with Free Churchmen in this or in any other matter.

HEBDEN BRIDGE Council is arranging to hold services for the 500 navvies engaged within two miles of the town, in building a huge reservoir for the Halifax Corporation. The contractor has agreed to let the Council have the use of a large Reading room on alternate Sundays, the Church party occupying it the other Sundays.

SHREWSBURY Council, through the generosity of the lay Secretary and an honoured Vice-President, meets in a commodious room free of charge, and also has the nucleus of a valuable library generously placed at its disposal.

SCOTTER Council proposes to start a Reading room with plenty of Free Church literature.

TIVERTON Council held a meeting, in conjunction with the Church of England Temperance Society, in support of Lord Peel's Report.

WHARFEDALE Council held a month's most successful children's services at the Yarn, Ilkley.

PETERBOROUGH Council proposes to establish a Young People's Social Institute.

UCKFIELD Council has started a united P.S.A. service.

BLACKHEATH and **GREENWICH** Council has been presented by one of its members with a mission hall in a neglected district. There services are held regularly.

TORQUAY Council had a considerable share in getting the management of the Nurses' Institution of the town made truly representative. The Council organised a Conference of Sunday School workers.

LLANDRINDOD WELLS Council approached the managers of the "National" School with a view to the formation of a School Board. As there does not seem to be much hope in that direction the Council proposes to establish a British School in temporary premises.

GILLINGHAM Council has distributed a good number of copies of "A Catechism for Protestant Dissenters."

FRODSHAM Council has arranged a series of temperance meetings in the Town Hall on alternate Sunday evenings. The programme includes music, recitations, a short address, and refreshments.

WOOLWICH and **PLUMSTEAD** Council, in conjunction with the Ruri-decanal Conference, drew up and presented questions to the candidates at the borough elections.

SHEFFIELD Council successfully memorialised the School Board against the decision to supply all the boys of Standard VII. with dummy rifles, and to teach them to use the same.

CARLISLE Council has induced the Burial Board to delete the word "objectionable" as applied to any part of the cemetery.

BOURNEMOUTH Council has organised a course of eighteen lectures on Free Church History and principles.

ALDERSHOT and **FARNHAM** Council has visited every village church. Lectures have been given to Sunday school teachers, a Sunday School Union has been formed and normal classes commenced.

Shepton Mallet Council received valuable help from the Salvation Army in conducting open-air services. The work of the cycle brigade was interfered with by the weather in June.

Central Somerset Council has started a Temperance Union for Glastonbury.

Haydon Bridge Council has arranged that the Nonconformist Sunday school shall meet at the same hour as the Church Sunday school. It had been noticed that after attending the Nonconformist school the children went to the Church of England school, and eventually drifted over to the Church. The Church of England school commenced when the others close.

Barnstaple Council has instituted quarterly united gatherings at the various churches, in rotation, for the purpose of advancing Free Church principles by lectures and in other ways.

Newton-in-Makerfield Council nominated one of its members at the last municipal election to contest a ward against a publican who had previously held the seat.

Rochester and Chatham Council was invited by the School Board to examine the schools in religious knowledge. The invitation was accepted, and, for the first time, children were examined by Free Church ministers. The work has hitherto been done by the Anglican clergy.

Southampton Council sent a copy of the Free Church Catechism to all the Sunday school superintendents in its area, with a request that they would introduce it into their schools. The Council received £20 by a sale of work to help to clear off the debt of the Hants Federation.

Teignmouth Council collected over £40 for the Indian Famine Relief Fund.

Margate and Westgate Council, in conjunction with the State Church, works the Alexandra Alms Houses.

Coventry Council has instituted a Free Church Help Fund, which does much good work in secret. The cases helped are known only to the visitor, the secretary in the church for the fund, and a committee of five gentlemen. Gifts of money and of food have helped some families over a very trying time. With but few exceptions, those helped have had no connection with the Free Churches, and have only been discovered by parochial work. Mr. J. K. Starley is the mover in this matter.

Flint Council has succeeded in closing several small shops, which were carrying on considerable business on Sunday, by a resolution printed in the local Press.

Hay Council gave weekly Scripture lectures at the British school, which were gratefully recognised by the managers.

COLCHESTER Council holds services in the Stanwell Hall, which is crowded to excess. The address is always a Gospel address. The Council has started a Lay Preachers' Association.

FROME Council continues its successful work at Naishes Street Chapel, where an inter-denominational mission is carried on. The Council runs a Coal Fund for supplying coal to the poor at one-fifth of the market price.

BROMLEY Council urged the Sunday schools of associated churches to have an occasional address on some distinctively Protestant topic.

BRIDGWATER Council maintains a lady missionary who visits the homes of the people and especially seeks to befriend young girls, a large number of whom are employed in the factories of the town.

EASTBOURNE Council presented an address of sympathy to Alderman Strange, J.P. Mr. Strange had been nominated as Mayor of the borough for 1900-1901; but before the election he made some remarks publicly reflecting on the drinking habits of working men, and intimated his intention of giving a teetotal inaugural banquet. The result was that such pressure was put upon him that he felt himself obliged to retire from his position as Mayor-Elect.

LEEDS Council has urged the churches to furnish information which will enable the Council to draw up a scheme to prevent overlapping.

CENTRAL SOUTH LONDON Council has carried on a very successful campaign against disorderly houses. Two hundred places of evil resort have been closed, through the Council's efforts, since 1894. The Council has the co-operation of the police and of several municipal bodies. Last year forty-two men and women were prosecuted for conducting such houses, and all but four were convicted. Of the £330 expended Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., gave almost half.

CHORLEY Council supplies the public library regularly with Free Church literature.

BIRMINGHAM Council employs an agent, Mr. T. Turner, to carry on a navvy mission at Frankley, where several hundreds of men are engaged in making reservoirs for the Birmingham Corporation.

GLOSSOP Council enlisted the services of the students of the Wesleyan Training College, Didsbury, at their open-air work.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME Council has engaged a nurse to work among the poor of the town.

WREXHAM Council has now two district nurses.

NEWCASTLE Council has inaugurated a Federation Sunday, and nearly fifty pulpits were placed at the disposal of the Executive. The preachers explained the principles and aims of the Federation movement.

CARDIFF Council induced the Cardiff Corporation to reject the recommendation of the Parks Committee, suggesting the sale of refreshments in Roath Park on Sundays. The Council was successful in its opposition to the running of tram-cars and to boating on Sunday.

RUGBY Council has a Cycle Brigade, which visits each week one of the villages outside Rugby and holds open-air services.

LANCASTER Council has succeeded in getting a bye-law passed to prevent the crying of goods on Sundays.

GRIMSBY Council is carrying on an active crusade against Sunday trading. Districts are mapped out and visitors take round suitable literature, and, whenever possible, urge people to refrain from selling or buying on Sunday. The Council has asked the Sunday school superintendents to arrange for special addresses to be given to the young people on the subject of buying sweets on Sundays.

BEDALE Council held a united open-air gathering of Baptists, Primitive Methodists, and Wesleyans. It was the first open-air gathering held in the town. Those conducting the meeting walked singing through the streets to the place of meeting, where a very good company attended.

CRADLEY Council has opened an Evening Home for women and girls. A roomy house, admirably situated, has been leased, with class-room and gymnasium on the ground floor, girls' parlour and library on the second floor, and bedrooms above, which may eventually be set apart for convalescent or for paying guests. The caretaker's apartments are in the rear, and extensive grounds are attached, which will allow of croquet and tennis lawns being laid out, in addition to flower and vegetable gardens. Members will pay 1d. a week, and will be provided with the comforts of a home and offered instruction in laundry work, dress-making, cooking, gardening, &c., while healthy recreation and amusement will be supplied.

HAMBLEDON Council, during the summer holidays, found homes for forty-six London School Board children for a fortnight.

SWINDON Council has begun holding popular Sunday evenings for the people.

MOUNTSORREL Council induced the Parish Council to prevent the holding of a Sunday Sacred Concert by the Loughborough Brass Band during the hours of Divine Service.

OSSETT Council has established an Unsectarian Day school which is in a flourishing condition. The Council is also on the point of setting up another school.

FELLING Council has secured the passing of a bye-law prohibiting street-cries during Church hours.

ALSAGER Council within a week raised £55 for the Indian Famine Fund.

BACUP Council has a band of young people from the different churches who are known as "The Bacup Free Church Evangelistic Band." They conduct village services, take an active part in open-air work, help in lodging-house meetings, visitation, &c. These young men are mostly Gipsy Smith's converts.

The STOCKTON and THORNABY Council, during Stockton race week, held meetings at various points near the race-course, to denounce gambling and betting.

EXMOUTH Council stopped the use of cigarette lottery machines in the tobacconists' shops.

CHEDDAR VALLEY Council is seeking to rescue from the grasp of the Episcopal Church a charity of over £6,000, known as Cower's Charity, which was bequeathed for the benefit of the inhabitants of Cheddar Valley by a Nonconformist, but has been for more than one hundred years administered exclusively by Churchmen. At the instigation of the Council, the Charity Commissioners instituted an inquiry. The Commissioners admitted that a great injustice was being perpetrated, and urged upon the trustees the necessity for a new scheme. But they have declined to take any steps to remedy the grievance. However, the matter is not done with yet.

BROWNHILLS Council organised a fourteen days Gospel Temperance Mission, conducted by Mr. Tom Horrocks.

GRANTS TO FEDERATIONS.

The Committee of the National Council has, during the year, voted grants of money to the following Federations :—Leicester and Rutland, Gloucester and Hereford, Sussex, Kent, Bradford and district, Notts, Metropolitan, South Wales, Northumberland and Durham, North Wales, Berks, South Oxon and South Bucks, Hants, East Lancashire and East Cheshire, Cumberland, West Norfolk, East Norfolk, Devon, Sheffield and district, South Devon and East Cornwall, Hull and district, Leeds and district, Wilts and East Somerset, North Oxon, and North Bucks. These grants are made possible by the liberality of Mr. George Cadbury.

CONTINENTAL SERVICES.

This department of the work of the National Council has been developed during the past season by occupying several new stations, both in Switzerland and in Norway. At the request of the Committee, the Rev. C. A. Fellowes, of Birmingham, visited Switzerland in the spring, to inquire into the prospects of extending the work in that country. As the result of his inquiries and arrangements, it was decided to send chaplains to provide Free-Church Services for tourists in Engelberg, St. Beatenberg, and Geneva; and to postpone the occupation of other promising centres for the present. Arrangements were also made with the Continental Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, by which the services of both Free Church Organisations were advertised in a joint list, and precautions were taken against overlapping.

The following brethren rendered the Council valuable assistance by undertaking the services in July and August, viz.: At Grindelwald, the Revds. E. C. Chorley, of West Norwood, and R. E. Welsh, M.A., of Brondesbury; at Chamounix, the Rev. F. W. Collyer, of Sutton Coldfield; at Engelberg, the Rev. Dr. Duff, of Bradford; at St. Beatenberg, the Rev. Dr. Nicholson, of Upper Norwood; and at Geneva, the Rev. R. Harris Lloyd, of Cambridge. The services at Engelberg, St. Beatenberg, and (in the evening) at Grindelwald, were held in the German churches, by kind permission of pastors and local Church Councils. The accommodation at Chamounix leaves much to be desired, because the only place available is the Kursal, which is a place of amusement during the week and on Sunday evenings; a generous offer was made by an American visitor to bear a considerable share of the expense, if a chapel could be built, and it would insure the permanent success of this chaplaincy if the Council was placed in a position to accept this offer.

In Norway, the Revds. W. Cuff, of Shoreditch, and J. Beveridge, M.A., B.D., of Dundee, conducted the services at Framnaes, the Revds. W. Ross, of Newport, Mon., and H. J. Bayley, of Long Stratton, Norfolk, occupied Eide; the joint stations at Ullensvang and Utne were served by the Revds. J. S. Clemens, B.D., of Sheffield, and W. H. Muncaster, of West Bromwich; and Naes-i-Suldal was in the charge of the Rev. J. H. James, M.A., of Hebden Bridge.

From the reports of the various brethren, we gather that in all 44 services were held, and that the aggregate attendance was 856. These results would have been far more gratifying had the average of English-speaking travellers abroad been equal to those of recent years. But, owing to the political situation both in this country and in the United States, the tourist season was a peculiarly unfavourable one, and it is estimated that the visitors in Switzerland were not two-thirds of the average of the last few years, and in Norway the falling-off was still more marked.

The Council is impressed by the opportunity which these services offer of demonstrating the practical usefulness of our Federation, since no single denomination could undertake this kind of work with any prospect of success, and the imperative need of it is borne in upon us by the growing antagonism of "advanced" Anglicanism to Evangelical religion, and the reports which have reached us of the offensive Ritualism practised by many of the Anglican chaplains abroad. We have also received letters of warm appreciation from friends who have availed themselves of our services during this last season. It is proposed to seek the extension of this work by enlisting the interest and support of American churches, inasmuch as an increasing number of visitors from across the Atlantic frequent the Continental places of resort, and the majority of these visitors are of kindred denominations. Rev. J. M. G. Owen is the Secretary of the Continental Committee.

LOSSES BY DEATH.

Rev. John Martin, Leeds.

Mr. Martin was the minister of the Presbyterian Church of St. Columba, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, and had occupied the position of President of Leeds Council. He gave himself without reserve to the cause of his church, and to the cause of Nonconformity in Leeds. He had a very tender heart, and was most popular with his fellow ministers. During his year of office as President of the Council, he seldom or never missed even a meeting of a sub-committee. He was genial, hard-working, and had a most decided gift of dry, pawky humour. His death at the comparatively early age of forty-seven was a great loss to the Free Churches.

Mr. George Ingall, Birmingham.

Mr. George Ingall was one of the staunchest supporters and leaders of Nonconformity in the Midlands. He was an architect by profession, but also for thirty-six years he was the pastor of Saltley Road Congregational Church, Birmingham. His character, both as a man of business and a Christian minister, won for him the admiration and esteem of all sections of the community. While he was President of the Birmingham Council he showed conspicuous ability, business experience, sanctified common sense, and Christian zeal. He will be missed by troops of friends, and the Free Churches are much poorer by his death.

Principal Edwards, Bala.

The death of Principal Edwards was undoubtedly the most serious loss sustained by Welsh Nonconformity since Dr. Herber Evans passed away. It is interesting to recall now that Principal Edwards preached the inaugural discourse at the first Free Church Congress held in

Manchester in 1892. It was a magnificent sermon on Hebrews xiii., 8, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." Dr. Edwards to the end maintained his eager interest in the Free Church movement, and his death was felt as a very heavy loss by Nonconformists.

Rev. J. K. Nuttall.

The Free Churches of Liverpool sustained severe losses in the deaths of the Rev. J. K. Nuttall, of Great George Street Congregational Chapel, and the Rev. Charles Garrett. Both were devoted and earnest members of the Liverpool Council, and both, whilst loyal to their different denominations, were men of large sympathy, and were universally beloved. Their efforts on behalf of the religious and social well-being of the citizens of Liverpool occasion devout thanksgiving to Him who gave us such valued religious leaders. Mr. Nuttall was profoundly interested in the Federation movement from the beginning. He worked for its success with great heartiness, and was seldom, if ever, absent from the Annual Meetings. The cause sustains a great loss by his death.

Rev. Charles Garrett.

The name of Charles Garrett was honoured throughout all the Free Churches of England. His death is a great loss to them all, and especially to the cause of Temperance. No one who heard the beautiful speech made by Mr. Garrett at the Liverpool National Council on the question of Sunday Closing, will ever forget the picture of the white-headed, kindly old man pleading that before his death he might see this great reform carried out. His legacy to the Free Churches is the duty of fighting and defeating the liquor traffic. Mr. Garrett was a firm believer in the Federation Movement, and rendered good service to the cause in Liverpool.

Rev. John Aldis.

The Free Churches of Cheshire, and the Baptist denomination sustained a deep loss, by the death of the Rev. John Aldis, Secretary of the Northwich Council, which took place on the 27th of November last, at Little Leigh, Cheshire. Mr. Aldis was in his sixty-third year. He entered the ministry in the year 1862. Since the inauguration of the Free Church Council in the Northwich district, Mr. Aldis had been its Secretary. By many of the country churches (besides that of Little Leigh, of which he was pastor) he was regarded as honorary pastor and friend, his counsel and advice being at all times at their command. Much sympathy was felt for Mrs. Aldis, and her two daughters (the only son being in America). Mr. Aldis's father, theRev. John Aldis, is still living, and in his ninety-fourth year.

THE

SIMULTANEOUS MISSION.

The Genesis of the Idea.

The genesis of this great enterprise, by far the greatest that the National Council has ever undertaken, was very simple. Ever since the movement began, evangelistic work, and especially united missions, have been the first and most important part of the work of the Councils. The blessed success of these missions suggested the idea of similar work on a much larger scale. A few years ago a scheme for Simultaneous United Missions in connection with all the 60 Councils of London, was submitted to the Metropolitan Federation. The idea did not at the time commend itself to the Federation, the fear being that it could not be carried through, and it was dropped. But the approach of the twentieth century brought with it the suggestion for an even larger endeavour to reach the unevangelised masses of the country. The new idea was that all the 600 Councils in the country should at one and the same time hold united missions. The proposal was unanimously adopted by our General Committee, and no one who was present will ever forget the session at Sheffield last year, when the National Council enthusiastically adopted the proposal. The local Councils throughout the length and breadth of the country were not a whit behind the National Council in zeal and enthusiasm, and every possible preparation, both organising and spiritual, was made for the success of the mission. At the suggestion of the National Council, practically all the Federations held all-day Conferences, at which the mission was the sole subject discussed. These Conferences were attended by representatives from all the affiliated Councils; and there were at all of them prominent leaders.

Preparing the Way.

The Central Office issued a vast mass of literature in connection with the mission. One hundred thousand copies of a pamphlet containing the Rev. J. Tolefree Parr's paper on the mission, read at the Sheffield Council, and the discussion thereon, were circulated broadcast. The Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., wrote two excellent little booklets, entitled "To Missioners," and "The Direction of Inquirers," which must have proved of the greatest possible practical service. Mr. Meyer's close association with the late Mr. D. L. Moody makes his guidance and counsel in these matters of special value. An exhaustive pamphlet, full of practical suggestions (many of them new), entitled "Preparing the Way," was also published. The organising arrangement made by the various Councils all followed the main lines laid down in that booklet. A great mass of other printed matter was sold and circulated by thousands—a pamphlet on House-to-House Visitation, chapel porch cards, prayer cards for the home, purse prayer cards, inquirers' cards, workers' cards, twentieth century leaflets, &c., &c. Special note must be taken of the new half-penny Mission Hymnal. Between one and two millions of these were sold, and a considerable number of copies of the Tune Book. Further, and certainly not the least important item in the mission literature, is the little book of advice to new converts, written by the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, and entitled "All Things New." This was prepared at the special request of the Committee of the National Council. Never has the Publications Department of the National Council been so busy and flourishing as during the last six months. The great difficulty has been to keep pace with the overwhelming demand for mission literature, and the pressure at the Central Office has accordingly been very great. An interesting volume might be filled with accounts of the campaign in the different parts of England and Wales. All that we can do here, within comparatively few pages, is to give a hurried *resumé* of the missions, endeavouring that nothing essential or important shall be omitted from the survey.

LONDON.

All-day Prayer Meeting.

An all-day prayer meeting was held at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, on Monday, January 21st, to inaugurate the London campaign. The devotional services lasted from eleven in the morning until seven in the evening. The following presided over the proceedings for an hour each: Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., Dr. Horton, Rev. Darlow Sarjant, Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., Rev. John McNeill, Dr. Hanson, and Dr. Monro Gibson. On that day the whole nation was filled with anxious foreboding concerning the health of the Queen. At the suggestion of Mr. Meyer the whole congregation spent some moments in silent prayer on behalf of Her Majesty. The attendance throughout the day was very large, many persons constantly coming and going. But some persons remained the whole time, having brought refreshments with them. The proceedings consisted of prayers, short addresses, and the singing of hymns, a large choir filling the orchestra. It was felt that the spirit of the proceedings was such as to give the right key-note to the great campaign which was about to be conducted in London.

A great public meeting was held in the evening, presided over by Lord Kinnaird, who is a well known evangelical layman of the Church of England. A feature of the evening was an earnest and stirring address by the Rev. F. S. Webster, M.A., of All Souls, Langham

Place. Mr. Webster is one of the leading evangelical clergymen in the Establishment and has always been on friendly terms with Nonconformists. The Chairman and the Rev. H. Price Hughes, M.A., Rev. John McNeill, and Rev. G. Campbell Morgan also delivered addresses. Lord Kinnaird told an excellent story of the late D. L. Moody. Mr. Moody went one day into a cathedral and asked the verger if there had been conversions there lately. "Oh," said the verger, "You're making a mistake. This ain't a Methodist chapel; this is a cathedral." Mr. Hughes emphasised the fact that many devout clergymen of the Established Church were joining in the mission throughout the whole country. Previous to these meetings at the Queen's Hall, Conferences of ministers had been held at Christ Church, Westminster, and at the house of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P.

Preparatory Meetings.

The preparations for the mission, both organising and spiritual, were in London, as everywhere else, very thorough. House-to-house visitation had been carried out by practically all the Councils. United prayer meetings had been held for weeks before and private circles for prayer had been formed in many of the churches. It was thought advisable that in addition there should be a week of preparatory meetings at the great centres, and the Metropolitan Federation was fortunate enough to secure the Rev. John McNeill to conduct these. Mr. McNeill accordingly held great gatherings at the City Temple, Shoreditch Tabernacle, Westminster Chapel, and the Great Assembly Hall, Mile End Road. These undoubtedly did a great deal to prepare the public heart and mind for the great mission. Preparatory meetings were also held by many of the Councils in their several localities. Rev. F. B. Meyer visited nearly every Council in London, along with the able and energetic Secretary of the Federation, Rev. J. Fletcher.

Dr. Parker at the Guildhall.

The mission proper opened with a service at the Guildhall at noon on Monday, January 28th, conducted by Dr. Parker. It was a historic occasion. Never before has a Nonconformist service been held in the Guildhall. The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs attended in State, and the famous ancient building was crowded. Many hundreds of persons were turned away, unable to get admission. It was a great day for the City of London and for the Free Churches. The congregation was perhaps the largest and most heterogeneous that ever assembled in the historic building, with its traditions extending over nearly 500 years. All classes of the inhabitants were represented. "Chapel folk" were there in force; City men were a noticeable element; and Anglican clergy were to be seen here and there mingled with the throng on the floor or in the galleries. A number of metropolitan Mayors were present, as well as the Chief Magistrates of Windsor, Brighton, and Kingston-on-Thames. The gathering and the occasion were alike unique, and the mourning that everybody wore served to heighten the contrast the assemblage presented to those familiar with Guildhall functions of another sort. Dr. Parker first thanked the Lord Mayor and those associated with him for the use of the Guildhall. It would be the fault of the Free Churches, and their fault alone, if that hospitality were never renewed. Dr. Parker's impressive discourse was based on the text, Matt. ix., 36: "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion." The discourse occupies the place of honour in the volume of mission sermons published by the National Council under the title, "The Call of God."

Mid-day Services.

Noon-day services, designed principally to secure the attendance of business men, were a most important and most successful feature of the mission. The Rev. John McNeill conducted mid-day services at the City Temple for the best part of a fortnight. The area of the great building was almost invariably crowded by eager audiences. Mr. McNeill's discourses received great attention from the secular Press, a significant indication of the impression they were making upon the heart of the great metropolis. Practically the whole congregation at these services consisted of men who must have been greatly helped and inspired by the manly, direct, rousing and searching utterances of the famous missioner. Dr. Clifford conducted a series of noon-day services at Bishopsgate Chapel, perhaps, the most difficult mission centre in all London, and the large audiences that the famous Baptist divine gathered constituted a striking testimony to the extraordinary force and compelling power of his preaching. Dr. Clifford's main theme during the services here was "Be ye reconciled unto God." He treated his subject in the most direct evangelical way, and in a manner to commend the Gospel to the educated middle-class men who formed no inconsiderable portion of his audiences. It is hardly possible, at a noon-day service, to attempt anything in the shape of an after-meeting, but the Rev. Thomas Grear, the minister of the chapel, placed inquirers' cards in the pews, advising those who used them to hand them to their own minister. As a large number were taken away, it is possible that the fruit of these services may be gathered all over London. The greater proportion of the congregation each day were city men. The fruit of Dr. Clifford's mission here may be perceived in after days in the softening and purifying of commercial life in the greatest mart of the world. At Exeter Hall, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., conducted at one o'clock each day, during the mission week, a prayer meeting. There is certainly no minister of the Free Churches who is better fitted to take charge of a devotional meeting than the pastor of Christ Church, and the strengthening and uplifting of hearts that must have resulted from these hours of communion with God must be held accountable, under God, for no inconsiderable proportion of the blessing which was showered upon the churches of the metropolis. Noon-day services were also held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, taken by Rev. H. Price Hughes and others.

We cannot of course give adequate accounts of the work at all the centres. But the missions at the City Temple and the Metropolitan Tabernacle bulked so largely in the eye of Londoners and of the country that special note must be made of them. What took place at these great buildings was paralleled, though on various scales, at all the mission meetings in the Metropolis.

TWO GREAT CENTRES.

I.—The Metropolitan Tabernacle.

Mr. J. Everett, the Secretary, writes :—

> "The London Simultaneous Mission has come and gone, but its effect will remain, as God has marvellously blessed the efforts of His servants.
>
> **Thorough Organisation.**
>
> Believing with William Carey that if we 'attempt great things for God,' we may 'expect great things from God,' we in Central South London made early plans to do our part in the great campaign. As long ago as last June we met as a committee, under the joint direction of Revs. F. B. Meyer, B.A., Thos. Spurgeon, and W. J. Mills, elected our officers, formed sub-committees for certain work, such as visitation, advertising, services, finance, &c., and got everything as forward as was possible. Our district covers a large and thickly populated area. We resolved to appeal to the largest constituency possible, and so arranged for Central Missions, the principal being the Metropolitan Tabernacle, with Gipsy Smith as the Missioner, the Revs. W. Stott and J. B. Anderson at the others. We also arranged sectional meetings for young men, addressed by the President of the Metropolitan Federation, and our own president since the formation of the Council till this year, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., who has been the life and soul of the movement, not only in our Council, but all over the Metropolitan district. Meetings for young women were held by Miss Weatherley.
>
> There were two mass meetings for women, at which 2,500 were present, and seven centres for Children's Missions, by special missioners, arranged all over our area ; we also had a meeting for 'bus and tram men, and two well-attended meetings for policemen.
>
> All over our district, among the 36 churches and missions, and the 63 schools, perfect unity prevailed, all taking up the work with great heartiness. The whole area was visited three times, a different leaflet or card being used each time, we having

issued in connection with all the meetings 350,000 leaflets or cards of invitation, besides posters, window-bills, sandwichmen, and tramway advertisements, the result being what we desired. Everybody heard about the mission, and from the first meeting, especially at the Tabernacle, our services were crowded, and at some of them hundreds were turned away.

1,200 Inquirers.

God has greatly blessed the earnest and powerful message of Gipsy Smith, and the inquiring-rooms have nightly been crowded, over 1,200 persons having passed through them during the mission. Whilst God's power has also been very manifest amongst the young men and young women, many having been 'born again.'

The blessing, too, among the children has been very apparent, many young lives being from henceforth devoted to the Saviour; every centre sending in most encouraging reports.

It has been to all of us engaged in the work a most blessed time, and the wish on all hands for its continuation was very marked. The mission from start to finish has been characterised by the devotional spirit of all the workers, they vieing with each other who could do the most. It has bound the individual members of the churches together in a closer bond than ever before. But it has done much more than that; it has proved the turning point in the lives of a great number, who will bless God through eternity. With regard to the Metropolitan Tabernacle services, we were favoured with an exceptional building in all its arrangements, with an exceptional missioner in Gipsy Smith, and we took exceptional means to get the people in; but even all these exceptional circumstances would have been unavailing had not the Spirit of God been there in great power, which was manifest in every service.

Pastor Thomas Spurgeon was present at nearly every service; and all the officers and members, including the chapel-keeper, did all they could to make everything go smoothly and well, putting all the rooms at the disposal of the Committee, the result being harmonious working from beginning to end. Many of the neighbouring ministers were constantly in attendance, unless they themselves were carrying on a mission in some other part of London, as was the case with Revs. J. Tolefree Parr, D. J. Rounsefell, W. Williams, and C. B. Sawday.

We also had midday meetings each week day at the Tabernacle, which, considering all the circumstances, were well attended, addressed by Revs. J. McNeill, Hugh Price Hughes, and Mr. Henry Varley. The Welsh Choir sang.

Each day also, at four o'clock, the Rev. J. W. Ewing conducted Bible Readings, which proved, by their growing attendance, how much they were appreciated.

A Crowded Meeting of Children.

On Saturday, the day of the Queen's Funeral, we had two remarkable meetings, a crowded meeting of children in the afternoon, addressed by Mr. Newton Jones, and a packed meeting in the evening, from which hundreds were turned away, addressed by Rev. F. B. Meyer, Pastor Thos. Spurgeon, Gipsy Smith and his father.

We are now anxiously considering the best means to help and guide the new souls God has given us, and have issued 1,500 invitations to our first Converts' Meeting, which we intend to make one of a series. The work was begun and continued in prayer, which God has graciously answered, and to Him be all the praise."

Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, Pastor of the Tabernacle, writes :—

"Concerning the United Mission at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, I gladly bear record. Glory be to God, it was a great success!

There was much prayerful hope amongst the churches concerned, and not a little earnest toil before the public work began. The prayer has been answered, the hope exceeded, and the work rewarded. I believe that the various Committees were Divinely guided in their carefully made arrangements. God's seal seemed to rest on everything.

All the minor meetings contributed to the general success, notably the daily Bible Readings conducted by Rev. J. W. Ewing, M.A. Each afternoon the numbers grew, and the interest in the theme, REVIVAL, deepened. It was good to be there.

Naturally the chief interest centred in the evening gatherings. From the outset Gipsy Smith secured the ear of the people, and soon he had the joy of winning their hearts for Christ. He emphasised the need of Repentance, and the necessity for the New Birth. He denounced every form of evil, and warned men to flee from the wrath to come.

He preached a full and free salvation, and illustrated all with thrilling incidents culled largely from his own wonderful experience.

It was evident at each service that he had spoken to good purpose. The demonstration of the Spirit was never lacking. No sooner was the address over than scores were ready to testify as to their desire to be saved, and to respond to a singularly persuasive appeal to 'come along' into the inquiry-rooms.

More than 1,200 cases were there dealt with, many of them being of a specially interesting sort. One friend, who has been in the thick of many such movements, assures me that better work was never done before, so evident was the breaking down, and so manifest the breaking in of the marvellous light. We were all constrained to say, 'This is the finger of God.'"

II.—The City Temple.

The Rev. John McNeill laboured at the City Temple from Tuesday, January 22nd, to Monday, February 4th. During that time he conducted ten noon-day meetings and six evening meetings. It is very noteworthy that Dr. Parker gave up his Thursday noon-day service in order that the continuity of Mr. McNeill's noon-day services should not be broken. Dr. Parker, as is well-known, deservedly sets the greatest store by his Thursday service. It should also be stated that Mr. McNeill during the mission week held an afternoon Conference each day at Exeter Hall. Probably no missioner in London had a heavier programme of work during the mission week.

The apathy of Londoners is one of the most invincible things that the world contains. Mr. McNeill himself often laments the difficulties of moving the great metropolis. We have already referred to his noon-day services at the City Temple. At his first evening meeting in the same building the place was only half filled, but long before the week was out the crowds became so large that there was not nearly room enough to contain them all. The policemen who do continual duty at the City Temple stated that the scene on the last Sunday evening of the mission was such as they had never witnessed in their lives. The road was entirely blocked, the policemen were quite overwhelmed by the multitude, and themselves, helmetless and out of breath, became part and parcel of the struggling mass.

There is no doubt that Mr. McNeill's sermons brought great blessing to many. At the end of each service, those who had decided for Christ were asked to hold up their hands, and a great many responded to this invitation. Mr. McNeill's shrewd, natural, homely talks, his pathos, aptness, and hard hits, coupled with his buoyant faith in Christ, his reverence for God's Word, and his reliance on the Holy Spirit's power, made his addresses unique. Mr. McNeill showed that his volcanic energy was unabated, and that his consuming religious enthusiasm exercises as magnetic an influence as ever. The audiences at the City Temple were mainly city men, with a fair proportion of women, and a sprinkling of ministers of the Gospel.

IMPRESSIONS OF ROVING COMMISSIONERS.

With a view to gathering some interesting impressions of the campaign in London, the General Organising Secretary engaged some capable correspondents to visit a number of centres and put together briefly some notes of what they saw and learned. We print these herewith.

One correspondent writes:—

St. John's Square.

"I made a rapid tour one night of St. John's Square Wesleyan Chapel, Clerkenwell, Wesley's Chapel, City Road, and Bloomsbury Baptist Chapel. Everything that I saw and heard was very encouraging. The Rev. James Flanagan, the superintendent of the South London Primitive Methodist Mission, was the missioner at St. John's Square. The area of the long, large building was full, and the right kind of people, the people that the mission was designed to reach, had gathered in strong force. Working men, factory girls, poor mothers with their children, people to whom the inside of a church was probably an unfamiliar sight, of such as these was the congregation composed. Mr. Flanagan spoke with great power and vigour from the text, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' I was informed that the attitude of the workers at this centre was one of strong, hopeful expectation, and judging from what I saw I should say it is not likely to be disappointed.

Wesley's Chapel.

From St. John's Square I drove to Wesley's Chapel, City Road, where the Rev. T. Ferrier Hulme, the minister of the chapel, was himself the missioner. I found that the outlook there was most promising. The attendance of young men, mostly from the City warehouses, was particularly good. Mr. Hulme has had considerable experience as an evangelist and every month he gathers together from 300 to 400 young men at a special service, and men always predominate in his congregation. The mission at this centre is likely to do incalculable good to the young commercial life of the City of London.

Bloomsbury.

Mr. Henry Varley was the missioner at Bloomsbury. I had some talk with the officials during the service and what I witnessed was very cheering. The Rev. B. J. Gibbon, the minister of the church, took the greatest possible interest in the mission and assisted in the services. Mr. Varley, in a quiet impressive manner, dealt with the story of the rich young ruler, and earnestly sought to remove the difficulties which some anxious souls encounter in coming to Christ. The address was a solid, weighty, wise utterance. The congregation here, as at St. John's Square, though not quite to the same degree, was largely composed of working people and the unreached outsiders."

Another correspondent writes :—

"All the reports that came to me indicated that the mission was very successful in North London, and my own necessarily very limited observations abundantly confirmed these statements. On the Wednesday evening of the mission week, I looked in at Union Chapel, Islington, New Court Chapel, Tollington Park, and Camden Road Baptist Chapel. In each of these places of worship there were many signs that times of service and refreshing were being experienced.

Union Chapel.

Mr. Silvester Horne was the missioner at Union Chapel. Thither I proceeded first. At eight o'clock, when the service was due to begin, there was a mere handful of people sprinkled in cold isolation over the great building, and my spirits went down with a great plunge. But in a few minutes the stream of worshippers began to flow steadily, and when I left after twenty minutes' stay, the area was almost filled, and the people were still coming. I am convinced that in London suburbs eight o'clock is just early enough for the beginning of meetings on week nights. Mr. Horne was supported by the Rev. W. Hardy Harwood, the minister of the church, the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis, and others. The large congregation was mainly composed of church-going people. This is a centre, I imagine, where the influence of the mission will be felt most strongly in the deepening of the spiritual life of Christians. It would be a great mistake, however, to conclude, even if all the congregation consisted of church-goers, that the missioner was not preaching to the unconverted. Surely, there are many unconverted hearers in our churches, and among these I hope Mr. Horne may have reaped a great harvest.

New Court Chapel.

The Rev. Hugh C. Wallace, of Burnley, was the missioner at New Court Chapel. The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, the minister of the chapel, has maintained and strengthened its splendid organisation, and I fully expected an excellent attendance. Over the great columns of the façade was stretched a huge piece of cloth or bunting, announcing with arresting prominence the mission services. I could not get a seat in the area, and the gallery, too, contained a large number of people. Fully 1,000 persons must have been present.

Camden Road Chapel.

Mr. G. R. Cairns, an American Evangelist, of whom the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., thinks very highly, conducted the services at Camden Road Baptist Chapel. I just arrived in time to hear the conclusion of what must have been, judging from the portion I heard, a rousing, evangelistic appeal. Mr. Cairns' theme was Christ our Substitute, and he finished with a tender exhortation to sinners, 'to come under the blood of the Saviour' at once. Some of his illustrations were incidents of the American Civil War, seemingly an exhaustless source of anecdote for American preachers. The attendance was good."

Another correspondent writes :—

Life-long Impressions.

"Some impressions are easily forgotten, but others so fix themselves in the memory that a life-time fails to efface them. In this latter class, surely, must be placed the scenes of the mission week in London. It is easy to imagine the young Free Churchman of to-day in the evening of life telling how, at the dawn of the new century, when the nation stood under the shadow of a great loss, the Evangelical Free Churches of London, for the first time in their history, stood side by side, regardless of class, creed, or denomination, and simultaneously made one grand assault on the forces that make for unrighteousness. It has been a great occasion. The Free Churches of the Metropolis have striven hard to be equal to it, and I believe they have succeeded.

I have visited nine places during the week. At each I have found ministers and laymen alike rejoicing over this practical and striking demonstration, of their unity, and entering with fixed purpose on the work before them. It has been a sight to strengthen the weakest to see the whole-hearted earnestness with which pulpit and pew have joined hands in this unique campaign. 'We can think of nothing else but the mission,' remarked a prominent Presbyterian layman at the close of one of the services, and wherever I have gone there has been the same feeling.

Rev. H. Price Hughes, M.A., at Streatham.

I had heard Mr. Hughes at the all-day prayer meeting at the Queen's Hall, advocating the importance of every Free Churchman taking a share in the mission, and at Streatham Wesleyan Church I found him putting his precepts into practice. This is the circuit in which Mr. Hughes laboured before starting the West London Mission, and it is hardly necessary to say he is always a welcome visitor. One of the workers spoke of the mission as 'a renewal of old times.' About 1,000 persons were present. Those who have only heard Mr. Hughes on the platform denouncing some social wrong would scarcely have recognised this other Mr. Hughes—the evangelist. The fighting element was gone, and in its place stood the pleader. The short, sharp pithy points with which Mr. Hughes so often effectively drives home his platform utterances were absent. All we saw was a man, of great mental power and eloquence, pleading earnestly in simple sentences, which a child might have understood, the importance of immediate surrender to Christ.

In the school-room a shop assistants' meeting was to be addressed by Mr. Hughes at 9 o'clock. A number of young people had assembled long before that hour and were having refreshments and chatting with the workers.

Dr. Hanson at Brixton.

The service was just concluding when I arrived at the Brixton Independent Church. The area of the building was well filled, about 800 persons being present. In quiet tones full of expression Dr. Hanson was making an appeal to his hearers to decide for Christ. His keen, intellectual face was aglow with passionate earnestness as he addressed his remarks to the young men present. He struck the same note that, a little while before, I had heard from Mr. Hughes, that is the importance of immediate personal surrender. 'I am specially interested in you young men,' said he, 'I know your difficulties. You feel now that you would really like to be a Christian, yet you hesitate, and if you go away the impression may have gone to-morrow, and you know not if ever again you will be so near Christ as you are to-night. Decide now! now!'

I learned that there are eleven churches uniting in this mission, and the workers were very sanguine as to the good that was being done.

Rev. T. W. Jamieson at Westbourne Park.

An open-air service had been held previous to the mission service. By the time I reached the chapel, a little after eight o'clock, the floor of the building was well filled. Mr. Jamieson has a style of preaching peculiarly his own. His sermon was more like a talk than a pulpit discourse. Every sentence was plain and to the point, and his illustrations were well chosen and with a touch of humour that makes them cling to the memory. He pointed out that many a man was trying to hide his 'little sins' by committing greater, trying to salve his conscience by doing further wrong. But it was all in vain. One sin might be overshadowed by another, but the day of unveiling would come.

As might be expected in Dr. Clifford's parish, the young people were well to the front. The entire neighbourhood has been visited, and invitations to the mission left at every house.

Rev. James Baillie at Paddington.

From the beginning Mr. Baillie's mission at Paddington Chapel has been greatly blessed, there being inquirers at every meeting. The attendance, too, has been very encouraging. About 900 persons had assembled by the time I reached the chapel. All the ministers in the district were present. Mr. Baillie was preaching from Zachariah 13th, verse 1. He is one of the most interesting preachers I have listened to. His manly, straightforward appeals make a deep impression. His illustrations are most vivid, drawn largely from his travels in the Holy Land and elsewhere. In connection with the mission, children's services are held each evening. They are largely attended.

Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross, M.A., at Regent Square.

Here a most remarkable revival was going on. I was not in time for the sermon, but its effect was plainly seen in the faces of the large audience that stayed for the after meeting, and in the quiet subdued tones in which the officials spoke of the service. The sermons were described as growing in power each night, the people being held spell-bound. Everyone talked of the mission as the supreme thing of the hour, and seemed full of hopefulness as to the results. One feature of the mission is a special service for students.

Rev. A. T. Guttery at Dulwich.

On Friday night I started my rambles by visiting the mission conducted by Rev. A. T. Guttery at Dulwich. Arriving before the time for the service, I went into the vestry, where a number of ministers and workers were gathered praying for God's blessing on their efforts. Here, as everywhere, were signs of intense earnestness. I was informed between two and three hundred persons had assembled each afternoon for the Bible readings, and at nights there had been large audiences. Mr. Guttery's addresses were spoken of as earnest and powerful, and as having made a marked impression.

Rev. J. B. Stoneman at Peckham.

Signs of the activity of the workers are to be seen on every hand. In the shop windows are bills announcing the mission, and outside the church in Bellenden Road two very large signs attract the passers by. Every house in the neighbourhood has been visited at least twice and personal invitations to the Mission given to the occupants. Twenty thousand invitation cards have also been distributed. A strong united choir is rendering splendid service.

Mr. Stoneman is one of the foremost ministers in the United Methodist Free Church denomination. His appeals are quite unconventional, and full of "hard hits." He draws freely on his memory for incidents with which to illustrate his text, and has the great gift of making his hearers feel that what he says he thoroughly believes.

Rev. H. J. Perkins at Peckham Park Road.

Mr. Perkins was just commencing the after meeting when I reached the Peckham Park Road Chapel. About 300 people had remained. The mission, I learned, had so far been a decided success. Fifty-five persons had passed through the inquiring-room. Two interesting incidents were told me. A young man was converted at one of the services, and next night he brought his companion, who also entered the inquiry-room. The other incident was a woman who having found salvation brought her neighbour to the next meeting and was the means of leading her to Christ. A successful women's meeting had been held. The Sunday School Teachers and Endeavourers are helping the Mission with great enthusiasm.

Maze Pond Baptist Chapel.

Outside the building in the Old Kent Road were a number of signs bearing the words 'Mission here To-night, Come'! A gratifying feature is that the mission is almost entirely being worked by young people. The Missioners are Rev. W. Kirk Bryce, and Rev. D. Merrick Walker. The congregations have averaged over 500 each night—mostly men and women who scarcely know what the inside of a church is like. Successful dinner-hour services have been held in several of the large factories in the neighbourhood."

Another correspondent writes :—

"In visiting a number of mission centres scattered about East, South, and North London, a motley train of emotions and impressions flit across heart and mind.

A memorable, historic week! Black, black, black, reiterates again and again the grim physical fact that the greatest Queen of all the ages was lying unburied, having paid the last debt of nature, like any ordinary matron. 'Christ is the Saviour of the world: the Alpha and Omega. Then claim instant salvation. Decide at once for Christ,' was the soft persuasive commentary, the comforting refrain of several score of missioners. One heard it in every chapel entered.

Outside Shoreditch Tabernacle! A nipping air gives additional attractiveness to the bright lights and brighter posters, and we follow the crowd. No seat is apparent. Better retire then. But no, it is too late; the warm, welcoming smile of the steward is reassuring, and with the truest courtesy that takes pleasure in the sacrifice, he vacates his own seat for you. The hymn book is only a half-penny, but with it in your hands, you are no longer an outsider.

'Rock of ages cleft for me,' stills the disturbing racket of the mean streets, the noise might be that of the great ocean of time, powerless against the great Cross, the rock of ages—the only geology familiar to the speaker. He begins to tell of Ruth's womanly entreaty to Naomi. A new light steals into the eye of the rough fellow in the next pew, with chin unshaven, dirty corduroys, and dirtier neckcloth; the restless factory girls become more subdued and gentle in aspect as they for the moment identify themselves with Ruth; an aged, feeble granny, entwines Naomi into her own life. One of the many babies present begins to cry; but none are disturbed.

Scores are touched; and of these many slip away into the inquiry-room. 'Hysteria! Emotion!' do scoffers call it. 'Peep in there,' said the steward. 'Is there a trembling hand, or a moist eye?' A group in one of the aisles. Had I a camera, or a pencil, what a study, for 'Almost Persuaded:' a big, burly workman, well-meaning, but deplorably weak, stands irresolute; his wife with her baby, touches his coat-sleeve; but it is horrid to have to settle anything, especially with a swinging door and the street so near. Result doubtful; but up come reinforcements. A steward almost as burly, but with ten times the vigour of character, stands firmly twixt door and man and demands an instant decision.

I visited another mission centre in the East End. 'You want Middleton Road Chapel,' said a man at our heels, 'I will show you.' Here was an opportunity to ask about the mission. 'I'm not of that persuasion,' was his reply—'no, not much:' not so much of it, he acknowledged afterwards was his meaning. 'You see I'm a Jew, but I knows about the mission because for weeks beforehand young ladies come round to our house leaving lots of papers.' Dr. John Pugh was discoursing eloquently in the chapel; a prayer followed from one of the ministers; the congregation was very mixed—submerged. One lad came in an overcoat six sizes too large—workaday middle class. It was cold; and the interior was not beautiful, but Oh! the eagerness and compassion of the stewards as they knelt successively by each stranger. Our last impression was of a sweet-faced deaconess, grasping the hand of a grey-haired woman, and pleading so tenderly, that the heart, gripped tight by many trials, at last softened, and succumbed to the appeal from the Cross."

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON THE LONDON CAMPAIGN.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., calculated that in all the missioners every day of the mission reached 200,000 people. When it is remembered that the constituents of the congregations were continually changing, it will be seen how vast a number heard the Gospel during these memorable eight days. Mr. Meyer is of opinion that the impression was greatly intensified by the sorrow which overtook the nation. The sense of God and eternity was in the air.

The Rev. D. H. Moore was the missioner at Bow and Bromley. The congregations increased night by night, and the mission was extended a week.

The Rev. G. Eayrs, F.R.H.S., of Bradford, was the missioner at Brockley. He was very successful. A special feature of the mission were the solos by the missioner, who has a very fine voice. 120 requests for prayer were made, and 60 persons sought guidance in the inquiry-rooms.

The Rev. J. Flanagan missioned at St. John's Square Wesleyan Church, Clerkenwell. Special efforts were made to get the people of the neighbourhood to attend. Every night for an hour before the service, different methods were employed. Fifty workers were stationed at corners of streets to distribute invitations. A large van was taken round by another company, in which were a lantern and pictures and notices of meeting were exhibited, under the direction of one of the circuit stewards. The brass band with an illuminated lantern paraded the streets in other directions. And yet another effort was made at the same time. Thirty men of the business houses, well dressed, carried sandwich boards. On one was a bold announcement of the services, and on the other board was a Scripture text. Each wore a silk hat, all marched in single file, and in turn announced the service, and quoted a passage of Scripture. The most notable feature of the mission was the Dinner-hour Service for Working People, which lasted just twenty minutes. These were conducted alternately by Rev. John E. Wakerley and Rev. J. A. Groom. Most suitable and helpful addresses were given. The crowd that flocked in every day was a grand sight, filling the large area of the Chapel in every part. These meetings were so enjoyed, that those who attended requested that they might be continued. Mr. Wakerley has, therefore, decided to continue them every Wednesday at 1.30 for twenty minutes. This is a departure Mr. Wakerley has long desired. The whole of the organisation was in the hands of Mr. Barnett, the energetic lay agent of the London Central Mission.

Mr. Josiah Nix, the missioner at Deptford, held a remarkable mid-night meeting for publicans and their customers. The workers rallied in large numbers, and whilst the band played through the streets from half-past eleven to twelve o'clock, hundreds of invitations were given to the passers-by, and a vigorous onslaught was made upon the customers in the public houses. About one hundred persons gathered into the hall. As a result of Mr. Nix's appeal many of them came forward to sign the pledge. These included the soldier in khaki, the young man just beginning the downward career, the fallen woman of the street, the skilled artisan, the backsliding member of the Christian Church and many more. One of the most pathetic scenes was that of a begrimed coal-heaver, with every indication of his calling upon him, who with eyes full of tears shook the missioner's hand. A home of shelter was found for the fallen woman. During the whole mission at Deptford, 435 pledges were signed and 287 persons entered the inquiry-rooms.

Old and experienced residents of Ealing say that the place has never been so moved for many years as it was by the mission conducted by the Rev. J. Tolefree Parr. The Temperance cause received a great impetus by Mr. Parr's lecture on "The Down Line."

The Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., drew large crowds every night at Ferme Park Baptist Church. The place was crowded to the doors and large overflow meetings had to be held. There were many inquirers and these were of the type that it is not easy to reach—young men and young women of the middle-class position. No parallel to the religious enthusiasm Mr. Jowett has aroused has been seen in Hornsey, at any rate for many years part.

Dr. John Smith, of Edinburgh, was the missioner at Hampstead Wesleyan Church. On most nights, many people stood up in the midst of the congregation, to signify that they were seeking or had accepted Christ.

Dr. Forsyth's labours at Highgate Presbyterian Church were very successful. The great power which Dr. Forsyth displayed as a missioner astonished even his intimate friends. His style was so completely different that but for the form, and visage, and voice, it would have been believed it was another personality appealing from the pulpit.

Mr. E. P. Telford, who worked at the large chapel in Lady Margaret Road, Kentish Town, was especially successful with young people. Religion was brought home to everyone as a vital personal matter.

Rev. Vallance C. Cook was favoured with great blessing at the Queen's Park Congregational Church, Paddington. One night a young man who had just been converted, brought into the inquiry-room his betrothed, her brother, and his own two sisters. And among others by their side who had found Christ was an old man of seventy-nine years.

The Richmond Theatre was taken for the two Sunday evening services. The place was packed. A large number of persons had to stand, and some could not get in. The seating capacity of the theatre is 1,680. The missioner was the Rev. F. Marrs, of Nottingham. The congregations increased nightly. The students of the Wesleyan College, Richmond, rendered magnificent service. Night after night the town was paraded by what papers described as a choir of gentlemen with top hats and frock coats who held open-air services outside public houses and other places. Seventy-five adults passed through the inquiry-rooms.

The Limehouse services were conducted in Brunswick Chapel by Mr. C. J. O. Sanders. Many habitual neglectors of public worship attended the services. One working man said that he had not been in a place of worship for twenty-seven years.

Dr. Barrett, of Norwich, conducted Bible readings each afternoon, and services each evening in the Congregational Church, Finchley Road. It is felt that the mission will have a lasting effect in binding together the Free Churches of the district.

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan conducted a most remarkable series of Bible Readings at Ferme Park Baptist Chapel. The hour was eleven in the morning. Before the week ended the audiences that gathered exceeded 1,200 people. "The addresses," wrote a correspondent, "will linger in the memory of those who heard them for the rest of their lives."

The Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., and Rev. J. S. Allison, of St. Abbs United Free Church of Scotland, conducted services at Union Chapel and Highbury Quadrant Church. Attendances ran from 700 to 800. The local papers most cordially supported the mission. The general testimony is that the services were very helpful, and that they must have produced impressions on many young lives which will bear fruit in Christian life and service.

Dr. Monro Gibson had large attendances at South Kensington. His addresses made a deep impression. The organisation was thorough.

The Rev. J. G. Train, M.A., of Norwood, was the missioner for Blackheath. The attendance at the Congregational Church was good. Mr. Train's style and method much resemble those of Henry Drummond, with whom, in earlier days, he was intimately associated.

The Rev. J. Fleming Shearer held meetings at the Tabernacle, Stepney Green, and the attendance at all the gatherings steadily increased. The after-meetings were very large. Mr. Shearer held four meetings a day.

The Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., B.D., of Bournemouth, was the missioner for Woodford. The attendances were very good, and the tender and persuasive addresses of Mr. Jones produced a profound impression.

The Rev. Thos. Waugh, the well-known Wesleyan Connexional Evangelist, was the missioner at Devonshire Square Chapel, Stoke Newington. The building was crowded every evening. On the Sundays there was no room for all who desired to be present.

In connection with the Balham and Tooting Council (for which the missioners were the Rev. H. Varley, B.A., of Bradford, Rev. H. Shaw, of Leeds, and Rev. N. Dobson, of Deal) two great united gatherings were held on the Sunday evenings in the Royal Duchess Theatre. Long before the doors were opened crowds assembled outside the theatre waiting for admission, and at eight o'clock every part of the building was filled, and hundreds had to be turned away or directed to an overflow meeting elsewhere. It is estimated that there must have been upwards of 2,500 persons in the theatre on each occasion, and the Press described it as the greatest religious assembly ever seen in Balham. The singing was led by a united choir of 200 voices, and by the orchestra of the Y.M.C.A., of Clapham Junction. The devotions were conducted by the local ministers, while the speakers were the Revs. H. Varley, B.A., and H. Shaw.

The Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross, M.A., B.D., preached every night in Regent Square Presbyterian Church. The area was always full. All the addresses were much appreciated, and resulted in great blessing.

Brondesbury Centre hired a theatre on the day of the Queen's funeral, and had it packed from floor to ceiling with its usual attendants for an unusual purpose.

A feature of the mission at South West Ham was the ingathering of children and young people. A teacher had the joy of seeing every scholar in his class decide for Christ. The class consisted of fourteen youths, some of them almost grown to manhood. Two little girls, aged eight and ten years respectively, attended one of the children's meetings. When they returned home they found that their mother had gone to the adult meeting. When the mother returned the children were in bed but a slate was lying on the table on which was written:—

> "Dear Mamma,—You will be much surprised, and glad to know that we have given our hearts to Jesus, and we are going to be His little girls."

The missioners were Revs. J. Moffat Logan, J. J Mackay, B.A., and A. S. Lamb.

In preparation for the men's meeting at the Public Baths, Walthamstow (Rev. J. Wilson, missioner),on Sunday afternoon, eleven ministers stationed themselves at the three railway stations on

Friday morning, at 5 a.m., meeting all workmen's trains, up till 8 o'clock, distributing invitations to the men. Nine hundred men attended the meeting. A woman who was dealt with by one of the workers, gave herself to Christ on Saturday. She expressed concern for her husband, and at her request the worker went home with her, and had an hour's talk and prayer with the husband. He came to the meeting on Monday and gave himself to Christ. At the Monday's meeting a young man and his sweetheart stood together as an expression of their surrender that night. A poor man, far advanced in life, said to one of the ministers, "I have never heard of Jesus Christ before, nor of hell, except in the cursing of my mates." Late on Monday night a man gave himself to Christ, and was talking to Mr. Wilson, when a young Christian girl came hurrying across the hall, and with face radiant with joy, exclaimed "It's my father, Mr. Wilson."

The Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., whose labours for the mission in all parts of London have been indefatigable, had nightly crowded gatherings of young men at Walworth Road Baptist Chapel; Miss Ella Weatherley, who has taken a prominent part in the Christian Endeavour movement, has also had crowded meetings of young women at Surrey Chapel, and Mrs. Pearsall Smith, a Quakeress, also had crowded meetings of women at Upton Chapel and at the Newington Baths. The large attendances of young women at the Surrey Chapel were mainly secured by the efforts of other young women who met workgirls and others on their way home, and invited them in. For the time being they dispensed with the assistance of "mere man," having secured the services of even a female organ-blower. With the permission of the police authorities, the Committee of the Central South London Mission invited by special card all the policemen of the L Division, with their wives or sweethearts, to tea at Hawkstone Hall (Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road). Meetings were arranged for 'busmen and others.

The Weaver Brothers gathered large congregations every evening at the Shoreditch Tabernacle.

The vicar of St. Jude's, Mildmay Park, took part in one of the services at the Wesleyan Church there.

Lord Kinnaird was a most diligent helper during the mission. His daughter, the Hon. Emily Kinnaird, delivered addresses at women's meetings, and so did Miss Morley, of the Y.W.C.A., the daughter of the late Mr. Samuel Morley.

A special effort was made to reach the Jews in the East End of London. The Rev. James Mackintosh, under whose pastoral charge is the Presbyterian Jewish Mission in the Whitechapel Road, and Mr. M. Polan, the missioner, were jointly responsible for the enterprise. Twenty-five thousand tracts in Yiddish were distributed by visitors, not only in Stepney and St. George's in the East, but also in Soho. One was headed "A Friendly Letter to the Jews." This dealt with the priesthood, kingship, and prophetical office of the Lord Jesus. At every Jewish house an invitation to the meeting at John Knox's Church, Oxford Street, Stepney, was left, in addition to a tract. No little stir was occasioned in Jewish quarters by their distribution. But happily there was no serious opposition. A meeting was held one evening at John Knox's Church with an attendance of eighty Jews. For the lesson, a portion of the Law was read, similar to that adopted by the Synagogues, and then two friends delivered earnest addresses in Yiddish, which were listened to with great attention. The character of the gathering proved distinctly encouraging. There were not only aged "fathers in Israel," but young Jews of both sexes still in their teens. On another afternoon a similar gathering took place on the premises of the East London Mission, when there were some sixty to seventy persons present. In the evening an open air meeting took place outside West London Mission Hall, in Soho. Mr. Finkelstein, a Jewish working man, and others, gave addresses. At first the orthodox Jews resented the intrusion of their Christian countrymen, and occasionally interrupted the speakers, but, here again the opposition proved insignificant.

The Rev. Fred. H. King proved a most acceptable missioner at Kingston-on-Thames. About eighty adults professed conversion; while about 150 young people entered the inquiry-room. A meeting for railway men was held. One man, who seemed to have made up his mind not to be impressed, was converted. This man had not been in a place of worship for years. Another case was of a lady who was upon the verge of Romanism but is now rejoicing in Christ. Two lads (about sixteen years of age) were fighting against conviction and left the service, and stood in the street with a group of others chaffing about the inquiry-room, when one of our workers, a devoted young man, entered the circle, and said, "I know who is going into the inquiry-room to-night," and then mentioned their names. They at once hung down their heads and followed him without a word, and that night went home to tell their fathers that Jesus was their Saviour. It transpired afterwards that several friends, without any agreement with each other, were praying that these lads might be converted that night. In Kingston the results of the mission were most happy amongst Christians, amongst backsliders, amongst the young, and also in a few cases among outsiders.

The Rev. H. J. Taylor, the missioner at Plashet, visited and conducted meetings at several workshops in the immediate district.

Rev. C Russell Hurditch had good services at Forest Hill centre. His afternoon Bible readings were quite an outstanding feature of the mission. They were largely attended and much appreciated.

The Poplar mission, conducted by Mr. Charles Inglis, assisted by Miss Inglis, has been fruitful in pleasing incidents. Four coloured men, backsliders, were brought back, and left for their West Indian home, rejoicing in renewed faith and hope. The son of a deceased Christian worker was also dealt with, and his father's prayers for him abundantly answered. There were a great many conversions, especially among young people.

The Rev. J. Telfer, the missioner at Buckhurst Hill Congregational Church, had excellent meetings from start to finish; the two Sunday evenings, Wednesday, and Saturday, being particularly encouraging in respect of numbers.

Perhaps the most touching and pathetic incident of the mission at Park Chapel, Camden Town, conducted by the Rev. G. Hooper, was witnessed on the last night, when an old lady of nearly eighty, white-haired and feeble, was seen walking up the aisle, in company with two young people, about twenty years of age, all three making for the inquiry-room. At Mr. Hooper's suggestion, an attempt was made to reach the theatre-goers. On the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings cards were distributed to all who entered the Bedford and Camden Theatres, inviting them to a Special Service in Park Chapel at 11.15 on the Wednesday evening. Some 250 people attended, many of whom had come from the theatre.

At Dartford several husbands and wives were converted together. Mr. Leonard Weaver was the missioner.

At Forest Gate, where Mr. George Clarke was the missioner, there have been many cases in which the whole of a family entered the inquiry-room.

Among those who professed conversion at Stratford, where the missioner was the Rev. Robert Wood, was the editor of an influential local newspaper.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE LONDON MISSION.

By Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A.

The London Simultaneous Mission is too close for us to be able accurately to judge of its permanent results, but it is already abundantly clear that, in many respects, it will date a new era in the history of the Free Churches—perhaps we might better say, of the Free Church, for in this great effort to publish the Gospel to the metropolis, the churches have acted as one. Ministers, officers and members have co-operated with absolute unanimity for the common end.

One of the results of the mission will be a better understanding between our ministers and the order of evangelists or missioners. There has been a considerable amount of misunderstanding, arising from ignorance of each other's methods and aims. The minister has undervalued the intellectual and spiritual power requisite for a successful career as a missioner; whilst the missioner has undervalued the results of the plodding visitation and systematic seed-sowing of the regular ministry. But these days, during which ministers and evangelists have wrought side by side, have sufficed to prove that the more elastic form of the mission address, combined with its direct appeal and its careful adaptation to produce a given result, may furnish a model for the regular preacher; whilst the missioner must have learnt that his success will be in direct proportion to the painstaking care which has been previously expended by the minister. One sows and another reaps, and the harvest is exclusively due to neither.

It is evident, also, that many of our ministers who have been called to act as missioners, and those who have been carefully noting the effect of simple evangelistic statements of the Gospel message, will introduce into their regular pulpit-services, more of the fervour, simplicity, and directness of invitation, which have been so signally owned for the arresting and conversion of men. Instead of preaching *about* the Gospel as advocates, they will bear testimony *to* it as witnesses, and urge it on their congregations with a new urgency and persistence. We have generally inserted a sentence or two, especially in our evening sermons, asking our hearers to accept the Gospel, but we have not sufficiently explained what the Gospel was, and we have not constructed sermons whose whole argument and purpose was to surround our unsaved hearers with coils of reasoning and appeal from which they could not escape.

By the courtesy of the Lord Mayor we were able to occupy the Guildhall itself, and utter the message of Christ in the heart of the City before its foremost citizens. In itself this was no small gain. It was a graceful recognition on their part of the important contribution which the Free Churches have made, and are making, to the national well-being; whilst we were able to accept it as freely as it was given, and with no sacrifice of our independence.

We calculate that on each of the days of the mission (with the probable exception of the Saturdays), we had 200,000 persons at our meetings; and as the crowds were always changing it is clear that a very large number must have heard the Gospel during the mission; and to these must be added the immense multitudes who have been reached by the house-to-house visitation, open-air services, and the distribution of tracts and appeals. Vast numbers of children have also attended their own mission services, which seem to have been very general and highly satisfactory.

We must confess that the great out-lying masses have not been largely influenced or induced to come to our meetings. They are not to be convinced of our earnestness or desire to have them by one spasmodic effort. It may be that it will take years before the misapprehensions that have caked over their hearts are removed by our reiterated invitations; but the Free Churches have never shown themselves more willing to welcome outsiders, and have never given more conspicuous evidence of their willingness. Well-known ministers have paraded the streets at the head of singing processions; seal-skins and top hats have been in evidence at open-air services; well-dressed ladies have undertaken to nurse the babies of poor mothers, that these might attend the meetings. But we must persevere with this kind of work. It will be a thousand pities if we allow the steam that has been generated to evaporate into the air. Our churches have been aroused, we must keep them so. We must find work for the energy which has been called forth. We must get our people to do as much for their own ministers as they have done for comparative strangers.

It would not be wise to have a mission service or an inquiry-room for every Sunday, but it is a serious question whether we ought not oftener to make it easy for inquirers to obtain the direction and help they require. For one that has the audacity to ask for the minister's vestry, there are ten who would gladly avail themselves of the help of the inquiry-room, if they could do so without the charge of singularity. The mission choirs, the bands of out-door scouts, and the inquiry-room workers, which have been organised for this mission, should be kept in readiness to be called on whenever there is a special need for their services.

It is a matter for great thankfulness that the Press has devoted so much attention to the mission. This has not been without careful arrangement beforehand; but it shows how much may be done in this direction. The Free Churches have yet to realise the vast assistance which the Press of this country is willing to afford, when the cause is good, and arrangements are made for the supply of material.

There is every reason to hope that the expenses of the mission will be met without calling up much, if any, of the Guarantee Fund, and this is highly satisfactory, when the vast expenditure which has been incurred is considered.

It is too early as yet to speak of results. That in any chapel 70, or 100, or, as was the case at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, 1,200 entered the inquiry-room is gratifying, but not conclusive. The increase of Church membership at the end of twelve months will be more reliable; though even this will not be absolutely conclusive, as many who have been brought to God will not join our church at all. The next great Free Church mission, if we live to see it, must occupy the local public buildings, and, where possible, the places of amusement in which the people are accustomed to congregate. We have all the machinery ready, and whenever we are sure that God's time has come, we will gladly embrace the opportunity.

The death of our beloved Sovereign had the effect of greatly deepening the impression of the unseen and eternal world. The mourning here in the attire of the congregations, the closing of theatres, the sense of sorrow and personal loss, the thought that death must finally come to all, exerted a solemnising influence, and predisposed people to listen.

It is a matter for great congratulation that the mission has so far been crowned with success; and it suggests an omen for the coming time that it is to be specially characterised by the call of God to men through the ministers and members of the Free Churches, as contrasted with intrusion of Priestcraft and the mummeries of Ritualism.

In conclusion, we are thankful to record our high appreciation of the services rendered by our Free Church pastors from all parts of the country. The mission could not have been carried through by evangelists alone, and it is a matter for devout thankfulness that so many among us have the true evangelistic gift.

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE PROVINCES.

The missioners, ministers, and workers entered on the provincial campaign in a spirit of high expectation. The great blessing which had attended the work in the metropolis encouraged and inspired the brethren everywhere. The hopes of the Free Churches were not disappointed. Never has England been so stirred throughout all her borders as she was by this great effort for the extension of the Kingdom of the Redeemer. It is estimated that over 3,000 missions were held at the same time. It is obviously impossible to cover the field in this Report. All we can do is to deal with a few of the more important centres, and then note some of the special features which characterised the work throughout the country. We are greatly indebted to many friends, and particularly to our Federation Secretaries, for the very valuable help they have given us in the compilation of this *resumé* of the campaign. Of necessity this part of the Report has had to be prepared most hurriedly, as we had to go to press immediately at the close of the mission.

BIRMINGHAM.

The mission in Birmingham could not have had a better send off than the Lord Mayor gave it by appearing in the pulpit on the first Sunday night of the mission. The Lord Mayor changed the date of the Mayoral banquet to avoid conflict with the mission, and he attended many of the mission meetings.

The preparations in Birmingham had been very thorough. House-to-house visitation had been organised on a gigantic scale. Birmingham was divided for this purpose into 150 Free Church "parishes," and the Council told off specially selected visitors for these parishes. Three visits were made to each house before the mission, and one was made during its progress. Mr. George

Cadbury supplied thousands of beautifully illuminated invitation cards, having a space for the announcement of local arrangements. No fewer than 60,000 Sunday school invitation leaflets were issued under the auspices of the Birmingham Sunday School Union. The Free Church Mission Hymnal was adopted, and a voluntary choir of 250 voices, under the conduct of Mr. Thomas Facer, led the singing. The serious and most responsible interests of the inquiry-room were placed under the guidance of the Rev. Edward Greeves, and he had a band of 100 workers. Stewards to the number of 60 were organised by Mr. E. A. Page for Carrs Lane, and Mr. J. Downs for the Town Hall, where the central meetings were held. Midnight meetings were arranged by the City Mission to be held in the yards and depôts of the tram and bus men, cabdrivers, and others who had no other opportunity of joining in the services.

"This mission," said Gipsy Smith, in the course of his lecture on the last Monday evening of the mission, "has been the biggest thing of my life. I have never seen such results in the same time. From Sunday to Sunday, that is in the short space of eight days, more than 1,500 names and addresses were taken of friends who had passed through the inquiry-rooms; and last Sunday was the record day in my experience, no less than 400 inquirers having, as a result of afternoon and evening services, been dealt with in the inquiry-rooms."

Birmingham was certainly "moved" by Dr. Clifford and Gipsy Smith in a manner that must have exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine amongst the Free Churchmen of the city. The combination proved a most happy one. Dr. Clifford's noonday addresses attracted audiences of from 1,200 to 1,500 every day, and the interest grew as the days advanced. His one theme was "Reconciliation with God," and this he treated in a series of five addresses, which were characterised by profound scholarship, fearless thought, and an intensely evangelistic spirit; each address was delivered with remarkable vigour and earnestness. His audiences were composed very largely of ministers and professional and business men, who expressed their appreciation of these addresses by requesting that they might be printed and published, and so become a permanent source of help and blessing to the churches. But, perhaps, the most gratifying results of these noonday meetings were the numerous testimonies received as to the benefits derived by individual hearers. Although Dr. Clifford made no use of the inquiry-room very many confessed their obligations to him for help received and stimulus from his inspiring talks.

Gipsy Smith and Dr. Clifford each admirably supplemented the work of the other. Of the evening meetings it is almost impossible to write without appearing to indulge in exaggeration; but the testimony of the police is that they never had such crowds to regulate at any previous gatherings in the Town Hall. They say that not even Mr. Chamberlain attracts as Gipsy Smith did. Not only was the Town Hall filled to its utmost capacity every night, but overflow meetings were held in the basement of the hall, and also in Carrs Lane Church and the Central Hall alternately; even then hundreds, and in some cases thousands, were turned away. The scene on the last Sunday evening was truly remarkable. The service was announced to commence at 7 o'clock; but soon after half-past five the hall was filled, and it is estimated that not less than 5,000 people were then outside clamouring for admission. Gipsy Smith himself only got into the building by the aid of four stalwart constables.

The figures given above indicate but a small part of the good done by the mission; hundreds, and probably thousands, who did not go into the inquiry-room received blessing, and many of these wrote to the missioner expressing their gratitude to God for his visit.

The mission was continued for a fortnight in the majority of the 150 Free Churches in the city, and special pains were taken to ensure the conservation of the results of the mission by speedily getting the new converts associated with the churches, and by taking steps to see that they are not only kindly received, but tenderly cared for. A special committee has been appointed for this purpose, and inquiries will be made during the next twelve months of the pastors of churches receiving these "babes in Christ" as to their standing in the churches with which they have been connected.

BLACKBURN.

The missioner was Rev. Frederick C. Spurr, of the Baptist Union, and the services were held in the Exchange Hall, with afternoon Bible readings in the Clayton Street Wesleyan Chapel. At the preliminary meeting, when the missioner met the workers, the Mayor of Blackburn, Mr. William Tattersall, was present. Mr. Spurr's earnest appeals found many responses in the large congregations which gathered in the Exchange Hall.

Many Anglicans joined in the services, and on several occasions clergymen of the Established Church were present. Stimulated by the example of the mayor many prominent townsmen attended the services day by day. On Sunday afternoon the Sunday schools closed early, and a children's service was held in the Exchange Hall with blessed results. On the same night an overflow meeting had to be held in the Orange Hall, to accommodate those who could not gain admission to the Exchange Hall.

Valuable service was rendered by the large and efficient choir, under the direction of Mr. J. T. Hamer. The Central Mission concluded after many hopeful signs on Tuesday, and local missions were carried on till the end of the week in Oxford Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, Barton Street United Methodist Free Church, Altone Street Wesleyan Chapel, Daisyfield Primitive Methodist

Church, Furthergate Congregational Church, Leamington Road Baptist Church, Mill Hill and Nova Scotia Congregational Churches, Whalley Range Presbyterian School, and Griffin Street Wesleyan Church.

BRADFORD.

There were 24 missioners at Bradford, including Dr. Bowman Stephenson, the Rev. E. R. Barrett, B.A., Rev. J. H. Hopkins, Rev. W. C. Minifie, B.D., Rev. Danzy Sheen, and others. A reception was given to them in the lecture hall of the Horton Lane Congregational Sunday School, when about 150 ministers and workers met together. Amongst those present, in addition to the missioners, were Principal Simon, D.D., and the Rev. Dr. Duff (of the United College).

The arrangements made for the mission in Bradford involved the appointment of 3,000 visitors by the various churches, and no fewer than 70,000 copies of the "Mission Herald" were distributed.

The opening service was held in St. George's Hall. The orchestra was occupied by a choir of 250 voices. Dr. Stephenson delivered an address, which was listened to with marked attention. The last hymn, which was that commencing "Man of sorrows," was sung by Dr. Stephenson alone, except for the last line of each verse, which the choir and congregation took up with much feeling.

Dr. Horton came over from Halifax on Monday to address a crowded meeting of business men in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute. Many well-known business men were present. Dr. Horton conducted the entire service, which was reverent throughout, and followed by the most marked attention. Dr. Horton said that he would rather speak to an audience of business men than a conventional audience in a church. He felt that they were there to do business, just as practical business as any which they had transacted to-day.

Some remarkable scenes took place in connection with the mission. One of these occurred at Girlington, where the Rev. A. E. Guile was the missioner. Pointing to a lad as he entered the inquiry-room, Mr. Guile said, "I have had my eye on that lad all the week." When the lad returned to his pew smiling, the preacher came down to the pew and brought him into the pulpit and said, "I have been talking all the week to you; when Jesus wished to teach the people on one occasion He sent a little child amongst them, and I will now ask the little lad to speak to you." The boy said: "I have given my heart to Jesus, and I am so very happy, and I am going to serve Him as long as I live."

At one centre a mother requested prayer for the conversion of her son, a soldier from South Africa, and before the end of the evening he was converted at another centre.

Including mills' services during the dinner hour, it is estimated that 20,000 persons heard the Gospel daily.

BRIGHTON.

The mission began with a children's meeting at the vast Dome, on Saturday afternoon. The Mayor, Alderman J. E. Stafford, J.P., a well-known Wesleyan, was present at the service. His Worship sent a letter to the local press asking employers in Brighton to give all their workers an opportunity of attending at least one of the services. He himself led the way. On Sunday afternoon the Dome was crowded in every part. Hundreds of persons were turned away, and an overflow meeting was held in the Countess of Huntingdon's Church, North Street. The Rev. J. Odell, the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, addressed the gathering in the Dome.

The mission was most successful. The town was divided into thirty-four districts, and a district was allocated to each church and mission. The Rev. J. B. Figgis, M.A., who has been a minister in Brighton for more than thirty years, said that during the whole of his experience in Brighton he had never seen such earnestness shown by the ministers for mission work. It might almost be said all the ministers had become evangelists.

The numbers attending the meetings were very large. At the afternoon Bible readings in the Dome 1,500 persons have been present, and at night the Dome has been well filled. The afternoon meetings have been especially helpful to Christians, and will result in untold good.

Mr. Odell rendered splendid service; his perfervid style, intense earnestness, and passionate pleading have made a deep impression upon the people.

The most striking feature of the mission was the late service that was held in the Dome on Thursday night, 21st, from eleven to twelve. All the public-houses were visited by at least one hundred workers, and the publicans were respectfully asked to expose a bill in their bars and windows announcing the meeting, and to allow some tickets to be placed on their counters for their customers. In many instances this was done, and all the workers were most kindly received. The theatres were also well worked. It was also arranged that there should be a muster at ten, and that a procession, headed by the Salvation Army band, should march through the town from ten to eleven. This was done, and hundreds joined in the procession; people opened their doors and windows and stood on balconies to see the procession pass. The public-houses were all visited *en route*, and at eleven o'clock the Dome was reached, where 1,500 people congregated, and a very large number of the class the workers were so anxious to get—non-churchgoers. The Rev. J. Odell could not attend, and the meeting was conducted by Rev. S. B. Lane, Secretary of the Sussex Federation.

The Omnibus Company and private owners advertised our meetings in all the 'buses free of charge.

The Costermongers' Union attended one of the meetings, and, previous to the meeting, marched through the streets with their band.

Special P.S.A., children's, young people's, and cabmen's meetings were held with good results, and a meeting was also arranged for the laundry girls. Altogether the mission in Brighton was a great success.

BRISTOL.

The campaign was carried on at eighteen centres in Bristol. Unfortunately the Rev. W. Cuff, of Shoreditch Baptist Tabernacle, was unable through illness to take his part in the work. This was a source of great regret both to Mr. Cuff and Bristol friends. A successful mass meeting was held at eight o'clock on Sunday evening in the People's Palace, Mr. Howard Davies, J.P., presiding, and addresses being given by Revs. J. F. Holdsworth and T. Humphreys. There was a large gathering in the great auditorium. Meetings for prayer were generally held during the preceding week, and in some districts a mission was organised in each church as a stepping-stone to united effort in the common centre.

Dr. Mackennal was stationed at Tyndale Chapel, Redland, of which Dr. Glover is the pastor. The Rev. Luke Wiseman, of the Birmingham Wesleyan Central Mission, took charge of the central district at Broadmead; the Rev. J. Burns, of Cheltenham, was assigned to the Totterdown district; and the Rev. Harvey Jellie, of Plymouth, was the missioner at Russell Town. Of the local ministers, the Rev. D. J. Hiley worked in the Bedminster district, and the Rev. Richard Richard was stationed at Kingsdown. Others of the local ministers were taking missions elsewhere.

Mr. T. Buttle, of the Jubilee Chapel, Hoxton, was the missioner in the Hotwells district. On the first Sunday evening of the mission a procession was formed at the bottom of Jacob's Wells, where the congregations from Brandon Free Methodist, the Bethel Ship, and Tyndale Mission met and marched with lamps and torches down the Hotwell Road. On reaching Buckingham Hall they were reinforced by the congregation from that place, and together marched, singing as they went, to Hope Chapel, which was filled in a manner it had not been for many years. The people were much impressed by the procession. Many came out from their houses, and a goodly number out from the public-houses, to see it. Mr. T. Buttle gave an earnest and appropriate address, at the close of which several persons declared themselves to be determined to serve Christ. At another service an interesting incident occurred. Mr. Buttle asked any who would stand for God to come to the vestry. In came a young man from the back door, and he gave the case immediately into God's hands, and the man was converted. The man was a publican.

Many women in the town banded themselves into a League for visiting people who did not attend any place of worship.

In the St. George's district Professor Henderson of the Baptist College, and his students, took charge of the centre.

A meeting was held at Broadmead Chapel to give the missioners and workers in the various districts an opportunity of reporting the progress of their work, and giving, by their testimony, cause for prayer or praise. The Secretary of the Mission Committee reported splendid meetings and great success. The number of inquirers increased every day. There was reason to believe that a large number of souls had been saved by the agency of the mission.

CAMBRIDGE.

The preparations for the united mission were thorough. The town was divided into six centres, at each of which a week's evangelistic services were held, in some cases conducted by the local ministers, in others by missioners from other towns. Each neighbourhood had been systematically visited, in some cases three times over.

This was followed by a week's united services in the Guildhall. Rev. Silvester Horne, M.A., of Kensington, was the missioner, and at the first Sunday evening service the capacious hall was crowded in every part, and an overflow service had to be arranged. Night by night during the week the same crowded audiences assembled. Mr. Horne preached a series of discourses upon the "calls" of the Bible, *e.g.*, repent, believe, hold fast, &c. One evening was devoted to dealing with special "difficulties," the missioner having previously requested any who were troubled by any special doubts, to state them in writing. They were dealt with one by one, and the treatment proved instructive not only to the writers themselves, but to the large congregations assembled.

On Thursday Mr. Horne addressed a very successful gathering of University men.

On the second Sunday a great gathering of the united congregations assembled in the Guildhall for a thanksgiving service. Rev. R. Harris Lloyd (Wesleyan) presided, and instanced among the results of the mission which could not be tabulated by figures, the welding of the churches together in the great campaign. Instead of looking microscopically at their points of divergence, the churches had grasped the fact that upon fundamentals they were at one. They had also been again reminded that in aggressive evangelism they could only preach the great saving truths of the Gospel. Dr. Rendel Harris (Society of Friends) then followed with a beautiful address upon the "line" or "net" of a successful fisherman. We needed to fish with a long line. Christ always did. The preaching of social and moral essays would not reach the masses. Rev. Charles Joseph (Baptist) also addressed the meeting, and the closing prayer was offered by Rev. W. M. Batterbee (Primitive Methodist). An interesting feature of the mission was the presentation by the Free Church Council of a beautiful Bible to the Corporation for use in the Guildhall.

CARDIFF.

The Rev. John McNeill was the missioner at Cardiff. The organising arrangements were superintended by Mr. David Shepherd, the Secretary of the local Council, and one of the best workers in the country. It was Mr. McNeill's second visit to the town, and he was warmly welcomed. At his first meeting the Park Hall, which is the largest hall in South Wales, was entirely filled, and the doors thereof were closed fully forty minutes before the afternoon meeting was announced to commence. The promise of the opening gathering was kept up to the end.

There were some entire innovations during Mr. McNeill's mission. Every day there was a meeting on the Exchange between one and two. The requisition for the use of the building for the purpose bore the signatures of many influential business men at the Docks, such as Sir John Gunn, whose name was the first on the precedent-creating document; Mr. Humphrey Wallis (chairman of the Shipowners' Association), Mr. Alderman Trounce, and others. There were very good attendances at these remarkable gatherings. Business men, who during high 'Change had airily thought they would just stay a minute or two, you know, to see what the preacher was like, were seen still there when the preacher had finished. The audience included clerks and labourers, boiler-makers, pitwood carriers, railway-men, hobblers, ship-owners, stock-brokers, ship-brokers, colliery proprietors, managers, and bankers.

In the afternoons Mr. McNeill addressed large audiences in the Park Hall and the Cory Hall.

In the evenings the Park Hall was always crowded to the doors some time before the opening of the meeting.

A band of forty ladies, organised by Mrs. John Evans (Eglwysbach) visited the Cardiff public-houses with the object of bringing the mission to the notice of customers, and inviting their attendance at the meetings. The experiment was as novel as it was daring, but there was no lack of volunteers. Had double the number of volunteers been needed there would have been no difficulty in securing them. Several of the lady visitors were wives of prominent local ministers and leading laymen, and many had never before seen the inside of a licensed house. All the houses within a mile and a half radius of the Park Hall were visited, this area being divided into a number of sub-districts, and two ladies being allotted to each. In the majority of instances the ladies wore close-fitting bonnets and cloaks, after the manner of Sisters, a precaution to avoid being mistaken for customers. The Licensed Victuallers' Association of Cardiff, at a special meeting, passed a resolution "that the whole of the Trade be written to inviting them to close from three to five on Wednesday, February 20th, with the object of allowing their employees an opportunity to hear the Rev. John McNeill." Other shopkeepers were requested by the Secretary of the Council to afford like facilities to their employees.

The Mayor and Corporation of Cardiff, headed by the Post Office band, a detachment of police and a company of the fire brigade, went in procession to Mr. McNeill's meeting in the Park Hall on the second Sunday afternoon.

On Monday the men on 'Change gave Mr. McNeill, through Mr. J. T. Milburn, an ivory-handled walking-stick, with an inscribed gold mount.

HALIFAX.

Every Free Church minister in Halifax threw himself heartily into the mission. The principal meetings were held in Stannary Congregational Church, and were addressed by Dr. Horton, but in addition there were a number of sectional meetings, special meetings for various classes of the people—for men who work in mills, for cabmen, for tramway and railway employés, and others. Members of churches, associates of Christian Endeavour Societies, and Sunday school teachers took a deep interest in the scheme, and made the visitations. Every house in Halifax was visited, and a copy of a letter written by Dr. Horton was left, a personal invitation being given to every inhabitant in the town to attend the mission. Missioning was done in the streets. Loiterers in the town on Saturday and Sunday nights were presented with Dr. Horton's letter, and they also received personal requests to attend the mission.

In the course of his letter Dr. Horton said: "With much personal diffidence, and yet with deep interest and solicitude, I venture to invite the presence at the meetings of every one in Halifax who does not love Christ. It is my belief that Christ and His claim can be so presented to-day, that every human being, in whatsoever condition, can recognise and respond to the appeal. The object of the mission is so to present Him. Will you, in whose hands these words of mine will fall, give them a moment's consideration, and a definite reply? Are you a Christian? Then pray that the whole town may be brought to Christ. Are you not, as yet, a Christian? Onght you not to be? Might you not be? I invite you to come to our services in a spirit of inquiry."

Dr. Horton was greatly drawn to the work at Halifax by reason of the town's association with the late Dr. Enoch Mellor, to whom the missioner felt that he owed a very great deal. Dr. Horton's gatherings were well attended, and much good is believed to have been done.

HULL.

Hull was divided into twenty parishes, in each of which some central church was selected as the centre of the mission work. The ideal was that, in addition to the usual methods of advertising, every house should be visited three times, and personal invitations given. Mr. W. R. Lane, one of the National Council's missioners, conducted the services at the Albion Congregational Church. We may quote the following notes concerning Mr. Lane's work from the Hull *Daily Mail.*

> "There is no mincing matters. No misunderstanding. 'Where do you stand with regard to Christ?' That is the great question. 'If you have not given your heart to Christ, why not give it to Him now?' His voice charged with fervour, the missioner pleads. He touches all kinds of heart strings. He plays upon the emotions—and the playing is legitimate. It is no mere sentimentalism in which he deals. The hymns that are sung are chosen as being directed straight at the heart. The prayers are earnest pleadings that souls may be saved. There is no doubt that the great congregation feels the wave of religious fervour sweep through the place. Many are visibly touched by the influence of the meeting."

The attendance at Mr. Lane's services increased every day until, on the Monday evening, 2,400 persons were packed into the Albion Church, and hundreds were turned away. At the meeting for men only on the Sunday afternoon 1,300 were present. During his visit, Mr. Lane addressed the prisoners in Hull prison to the number of 400 or 500. The service was arranged by some of the local magistrates and the Governor. The latter thanked Mr. Lane most heartily for his visit.

On the second Saturday of the mission there was an impressive procession through the streets of Hull, and a demonstration on an open space. From 2,000 to 3,000 persons took part in it, including the missioners and ministers.

The reports from all the centres were to the effect that everywhere a great and blessed work was done. Many striking incidents occurred. A big, burly man came to the Saturday evening service in Scott Street with his black dog, and the latter was held in the pew by one of the workers whilst the man went into the inquiry-room.

The Mission Committee of the Hull Council did splendid preparatory work. They issued 90,000 general invitation cards, and 120,000 special cards of invitation, giving photographs of the missioners and particulars of the various meetings. They also sent out 75,000 pastoral letters, and placarded 700 posters throughout the city.

IPSWICH.

The local ministers at Ipswich themselves took a considerable part in the conduct of the mission. At several centres, however, the missioners were drawn from district towns, or more distant parts of the country. At St. Nicholas Street Congregational Church the principal missioner was the Rev. W. A. Blake, of Stockport; at Burlington Baptist Church, London Road, the services were conducted by the Rev. T. Colligan, of Felixstowe; and the Rev. A. B. Middleditch, for 13 years pastor of the Baptist Church at North Finchley, took the lead at Stoke Green.

The attendance everywhere was good, and the services very successful. The work of house-to-house visitation had been done thoroughly.

KING'S LYNN.

The missioner was Rev. Geo. Neal Willis, of Norwich. A special place was given to the young people, for whom three Special Services were arranged, those held on the Sunday afternoons being crowded, as also were the mission services held on the Sunday evenings; while large, though not crowded, audiences were drawn together on the week evenings, that on the first Saturday being a meeting of workers, that on the second Saturday evening being given up to the advocacy of Gospel Temperance. There was also a meeting for men only, and one for women only, and four afternoons were devoted to Bible reading and prayer.

The closing meeting, held on 25th, was for testimony and praise, and a "surprisingly gracious time it was;" then we learned something of the effects of the mission, as one after another, of both sexes and all ages, rose and told of the light, peace, strength, and joy that had come to them as night after night they listened to the preacher setting forth, not in technical terms, but in words and illustrations taken chiefly from the Bible itself, the foundation truths of the Gospel. The meeting was both an *inspiration* and a *revelation;* it showed that the congregations had consisted mainly of those belonging to the several churches, and that very few of the people had responded to the invitations given to them by the parochial visitors and other helpers. As a mission to the churches the enterprise was a blessed success, but as a mission of the churches to the people it was a conspicuous failure. This much was clear, that a large section of the people will be reached only by special and adapted means. The Mission Hymnal was used at all services.

LEEDS.

The Leeds mission developed grandly from the first. The meetings of the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., for business men in the Philosophical Institute were crowded out, and the great Brunswick Chapel was filled every night. There were a great many decisions for Christ at the meetings. On Saturday there was a vast mass meeting in front of the Town Hall. Similar reports came from all the centres.

The organising arrangements were carefully made by the Rev. G. Watt Smith, M.A., the mission Secretary. His deacons at Belgrave Chapel liberated him from ordinary duty for nearly eight weeks. The work was carried on from 27 centres. Visitation was carried out thoroughly. The advertising of the mission was very effective and extensive. The gatherings on the first Sunday showed the "man in the street" that something unusual was taking place. Streams of scholars marched to the mission centres in the afternoon; singing bands were out in the evening; congregations marched to the strains of mission hymns from their own places of worship to the mission centres to join in the prayer-meetings. Briggate, which is the elysium of the rowdy street-walker, was invaded by an army of workers, and the human tide swept into the Empire Theatre, where the Rev. T. Nightingale preached. The building was crowded. In the other centres the attendance was also good. Even in chapels where no special services were announced the congregations were larger than usual.

Dr. John Smith, of Edinburgh, was to have been one of the missioners. The work thrown upon him by the death of his senior colleague, Dr. Andrew Thomson, prevented him coming to Leeds, but the Rev. Dr. Howie, of Glasgow, took his place. Dr. Howie is one of the leaders of the United Free Church of Scotland, and for a long time has taken a great interest in evangelistic or "home mission" work, as it is technically called in Scotland. Dr. Howie laboured at Headingley Hill Church very successfully. He made it his special aim to arouse the ordinary church members out of their lethargy and their self-complacency.

The mission at Blenheim Chapel was very typical of the general fusion of churches; the missioner (the Rev. N. W. Thomlinson) was a Wesleyan Methodist, the chapel belongs to the Baptists, and the gentleman who acted as mission secretary in the group is a member of the Society of Friends.

The other missioners included the Rev. J. E. Radcliffe, Mr. Leonard Weaver, the Rev. Campbell Gullan, the Rev. A. R. Henderson, and the Rev. Henry Curnow. They were all greatly blessed in their labours.

Good meetings were held for railway men. The attendance and attention were excellent. Quite a number of gatherings were held in work-rooms. Several of the large wholesale clothing factories were visited, and addresses given to the workpeople, the speakers at the various places including the Rev. N. W. Thomlinson, the Rev. S. Johnson, the Rev. J. T. C. Gullan, and the Rev. T. Clamp. Girls who work at the machines were very attentive listeners at these meetings.

Mr. Meyer's meetings for the students at the Yorkshire College were very successful. The lecture room in the dyeing department was crowded out; hasty arrangements were made for a more commodious place, and Mr. Fisk, the secretary of the Christian Union of Students, announced an adjournment to the Chemistry lecture-room. Professor Hartley presided. If the issue of a diploma had rested upon their attention they could not have listened better.

The Rev. S. Chadwick addressed a meeting of workmen engaged at the different engineering establishments in Jack-lane. The meeting was held on the premises of Messrs. McLaren, of the Midland Engine Works. Prompt to the hour, smoking their pipes, some 400 men assembled. No congregation ever listened better, or behaved more decorously than did that audience. Similar meetings were addressed by other speakers. A feature of the work was a meeting for the *habitués* of lodging-houses.

The meeting, or rather demonstration (which was only decided upon on Friday) held in front of the Town Hall on Saturday was a remarkable gathering. The friends met at the various centres, and headed by missioners, ministers, and leading citizens, marched in procession, singing such hymns as "Rock of Ages," "There is a Fountain filled with blood," and others well known. At the Town Hall Square from six to seven thousand gathered. Rev. H. T. Chapman took charge of the proceedings, addresses being delivered by Messrs. L. Weaver and A. Klein, B.A.

A very pleasing feature of the mission at Leeds was the hearty co-operation of many clergymen of the Church of England.

LEICESTER.

The mission in Leicester was carried on in eleven centres, the principal missioners being Rev. J. Gregory Mantle, of Brighton, and Rev. F. Hall, of Scarborough, the other centres being conducted by the following local ministers: Revs. E. W. Adcock, J. W. Allcock, N. Jefferson, F. Jones, F. Lansdown, J. E. Mattinson, G. H. McNeal, A. J. Smith, and A. H. Tolhurst.

Preparatory to the mission the whole of the town was visited three times. Special services were held in each centre. The Mayor, Ald. S. Lennard, entertained the missioners, secretaries and members of the Council to tea. In addition to each night's services, meetings were held for women, men, children, the police, young people in shops, in factories, and for the inmates of the lodging houses.

After Rev. J. Gregory Mantle had addressed the police, the Chief Constable appealed to the men not to be guilty of the folly of waiting for old age or a death-bed, before attending to the supreme claims of God.

Mr. Mantle conducted, each afternoon, Bible readings, attended by some 500 people, and Rev. F. Hall conducted a mid-day service which was greatly appreciated by a daily increasing attendance.

The services were exceedingly successful in results, some 600 inquirers having been spoken with after the first six nights' services. The average nightly attendance was upwards of 5,000 in the eleven centres. On Sunday, 24th, after the evening services, processions were formed from some of the centres to the Temperance Hall, where Rev. J. Gregory Mantle spoke at nine o'clock to some 2,000 people. On Monday, at 11.30 at night, a meeting was held for tram drivers and conductors, cabmen, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

Nowhere were the plans for the mission more carefully laid than in the great city on the Mersey, which was divided into twenty-nine sub-districts. The Liverpool mission was emphatically a mission to everybody, rich and poor. One afternoon the Arts Theatre at the University was filled with a distinguished company, on the invitation of the Students' Christian Union, to hear an address by Dr. Forsyth, on "Christ and the Modern Mind." Principal Dale presided, and Sir Edward Russell, Bishop Royston, and Dr. Nevin were amongst those present. The Revs. J. Reid Howatt (of London) and A. Hampden Lee (of Walsall), conducted over twenty special services for children. Twelve meetings for railway and other working men took place during working hours. For the five days, February 18th to 22nd, there was a noon-day service in Crosshall Street Church, the preachers being in turn Revs. J. E. Wakerley, Wm. Williams, T. Morcom Taylor, Dr. Barrett, and Alexander Connell.

The mission opened very well and grew in success to the end. It is estimated that at the centres on the first Sunday evening there were audiences amounting to 30,000 persons. In some centres hundreds had to be turned away. The inquiry-rooms were filled. Thousands of pledge cards were taken away. The preaching, said the *Liverpool Daily Post*, was—

> "Quiet, thoughtful, searching, at one time grappling with men's sins, at another unveiling the glory of Christian life and service. There is an absence of the crude sensationalism that once was rife, and an endeavour to reach the highest instincts of man, to touch into life his supreme hopes. The broad sympathies and deep thoughtfulness of Principal Mitchell, the manly directness of Mr. Wakerley, the evangelical earnestness of Mr. Parr, and the skilled power of Mr. Morcom Taylor are only typical of what may be found in the band of evangelists Liverpool has been fortunate enough to secure."

The local friends made the very best possible arrangements. No praise can be too high for the work of the Secretaries, the Rev. Robert Lewis and the Rev. R. Veitch, M.A. On the first Saturday afternoon the President of the Liverpool Council (Mr. W. Crosfield, J.P., C.C.) and the local mission committee held a reception at the Reform Club for the missioners, the chairmen of mission centres, and the hosts of the missioners. Mr. Veitch detailed the arrangements and the preliminary work accomplished, mentioning that of the three series of literature with which Liverpool and the district had been visited, the first numbered 170,000 copies, the second 180,000, and the third 230,000.

All the meetings were greatly blessed. Many children at the special meetings for them gave their hearts to Christ. Sometimes as many as 900 attended. The noon-day services were well attended and impressive. All the meetings were full of inspiration, helpfulness, and power. Everywhere congregations were large. It is impossible to take note here of the work at all the centres, but a few typical cases may be noted. The Rev. E. Melville Durbin, of Blackburn, gathered great audiences at the Kirkdale Presbyterian Church. Mr. Durbin is specially successful in addressing working-men. Dr. Forsyth's services at Sefton Park were impressive and fruitful. The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr brought many to decision at Pembroke Chapel. The services of the Rev. W. Williams, of Upton, at Prince's Avenue Primitive Methodist Church, were much blessed, many signified their surrender to Christ. The preaching of the Rev. Joseph Davies, at Jubilee Drive Baptist Church was aided by his gift of song. The Rev. J. F. B. Tinling, whose father was editor and proprietor of the *Liverpool Courier*, held large congregations deeply interested by his lucid and powerful speaking. The Rev. A. Connell, B.D., had large numbers to hear him. Dr. Barrett enjoyed great success. The Rev. John Holden, M.A., of Norwich, attracted great crowds of young men at Ullet Road Congregational Church. The Rev. E. Davidson packed the large Wesleyan church in County Road.

Successful open-air services, organised by bands of young people, were held. A meeting was held for publicans and their customers. As the *habitués* of the drink-shops left the premises about 11 o'clock, they were invited to supper, and then an effort was made to win them for Christ. Among those who have professed conversion were two publicans and the wife of a third.

Very great sympathy was expressed by the Liverpool friends for the Rev. J. F. B. Tinling, B.A., who was one of the missioners, and who was recalled to London by the illness of his wife, who died shortly after his arrival. Mr. Tinling, impelled by a high sense of duty, returned to Liverpool immediately after the funeral. He felt that his best service should be given to the mission.

MANCHESTER.

Never perhaps in the history of Manchester has there been such a complete house-to-house visitation to urge people to attend the meetings as there was in connection with the mission. Even the public-houses were visited, and landlords and barmen invited.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., was the principal speaker at the inaugural meeting in the Central Hall, Oldham Street. The Rev. S. Pearson, who occupied the chair, said that when the mission came to an end, on February 26th, about 660 meetings would have been held in Manchester. Mr. Pearson said that the workers had toiled splendidly. The visitors might be counted by hundreds and thousands, and as far as he could ascertain the work had been done with great faithfulness and thoroughness. The number of invitations that had been printed was 411,000, besides the invitations that had been printed in the various localities. Reckoning that their visitors had gone round, as recommended, three times, they might suppose that 120,000 people had been reached directly and 500,000 or 600,000 indirectly.

Mr. Hughes said that the mission was by far the most important aggressive evangelistic effort ever made in the City of Manchester, and the Manchester Mission was the most important of all provincial missions, because Manchester had quite a unique place in provincial England. Dr. McLaren wrote to Mr. Hughes expressing his earnest desire for a happy and prosperous time.

A great meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall on Sunday evening. The large building was crowded, there being between 4,000 and 5,000 people present. Overflow meetings were held at the Grand and Comedy Theatres. The missioner at the Free Trade Hall was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

Unfortunately Mr. Hughes was taken ill suddenly on the Monday. Mrs. Hughes was summoned by telegraph. Mr. Hughes's medical advisers—Dr. Fulton, of Manchester, and Dr. Barrett, of London—forbade him to take any further part in the work. The Council made the best arrangements possible to fill Mr. Hughes's place. The Rev. S. Chadwick (Leeds), Dr. McLaren, Dr. Clifford, the Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., the Rev. J. Thomas, of Liverpool, and others, readily threw themselves into the breach. Dr. McLaren, from the beginning of the preparations, took the greatest possible interest in the movement, and rendered magnificent service.

NEWCASTLE.

The work was inaugurated on the Saturday at Newcastle by a procession through the town, which was superbly effective as a means of attracting attention to the mission. For some time before the procession started, a very large crowd had assembled outside the Central Station, and when the Dunston Brass Band, which was to head the procession, came along Scotswood Road, it brought with it a still larger crowd. The throng, numbering about 1,500 people, moved off punctually at the appointed time, and its progress attracted considerable excitement in all the streets, and large numbers joined the ranks. When the procession reached Grey Street, it had assumed very large proportions. At the end of the march the company assembled in the open space at the bottom of Westgate Road, when two verses of the hymn, "Would Jesus have the sinner die," were sung.

In the evening, a public meeting was held in each mission centre to welcome the missioner.

The mission was conducted at fourteen centres, the arrangements were superintended by the Rev. W. Glover, who has manifested extraordinary organising ability. The missioners included Dr. Monro Gibson, the Rev. J. B. Meharry, B.A., the Rev. Howard May, and others. Dr. Gibson laboured at the Jesmond Wesleyan Church, where from the first he had excellent gatherings. Mr. Meharry's station was John Knox Presbyterian Church, Elswick Road, where there were very large congregations. On the Sunday evening a united service followed the ordinary service there, the congregation being joined by the friends from the Wesleyan and other churches in the neighbourhood. Mr. May's centre was Brunswick Wesleyan Chapel.

A mass meeting for men was held in the People's Hall, Rye Hill, on the Sunday afternoon. It was largely attended, and a hearty and enthusiastic service was held, presided over by Mr. H. E. Richardson. Perhaps the dominant element in the whole meeting was the fervour that was displayed, and this conduced to make the service impressive and earnest. The Rev. A. L. Fillingham gave a short address. The singing of the hymns was greatly assisted by the efforts of a small but capable orchestra. Mr. Story Readhead was the soloist of the afternoon.

Dinner hour services were held in the Elswick Works, by the kind permission of Sir Andrew Noble, K.C.B. The following were the speakers:—the Rev. T. E. Thompson, the Rev. A. L. Fillingham, the Rev. Joseph Rorke, the Rev. D. Ledger Pawson, and the Rev. L. B. Dalby. Each service commenced at 1.25, closing at 1.55, and solos were rendered by several friends.

An editorial in the *Newcastle Leader* said:—

> "There is in the progress of the Simultaneous Mission in Newcastle evidence of a wonderfully concerted energy on the part of the Free Churches. A very conspicuous feature of the proceedings is the manner in which the different denominations have successfully effaced themselves. They are not Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Wesleyans, or other denominations of Methodists, but all Evangelicals engaged in a stern struggle for the mastery over a listlessness and heedlessness which has become too common in the religious life of the churches. The missioners are seeking the people outside the churches, but they are stirring up those within, rousing the slumbering with a species of dynamic energy calculated to make the period a memorable one."

PLYMOUTH.

The missioners at this important centre included such well-known ministers as the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, the Rev. Sydney J. Jones, Mr. Percy Alden, M.A., and the Rev. F. C. Hughes. The Rev. F. W. Bourne also hoped to be one of the missioners, but he was prevented by illness from taking part in the work. Earnest bands of workers, in connection with the various places of worship, made thousands of visits in preparation for the mission and issued invitations, and the enlarged congregations in most of the chapels on the first Sunday of the mission, showed that their efforts had not been unattended with success.

Noon-day prayer-meetings were held during the week of the mission at Ebenezer Chapel. They lasted forty-five minutes and were well attended.

The visit of the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon to Devonport excited great interest. Mr. Spurgeon from the first had crowded congregations in the Public Hall, Fore Street. Each evening during the mission there was a prayer-meeting before the services, as well as music by the choir. Mr. Spurgeon, on the Wednesday evening, conducted a service for young people in the Public Hall which was crowded. Mr. Spurgeon told the story of his conversion. At 6.30 a torchlight procession started from the north gate at Keyham Dockyard, about 1,500 people assembling, many carrying torches and banners advertising the meeting. The procession was led by a fife and drum and bugle band. They marched to Fore Street, entered Catherine Street, and then reached the Public Hall. There was not standing room in the building some time before the service commenced, and, in consequence, an overflow meeting was held at Princes Street Chapel.

PORTSMOUTH.

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan was the chief missioner here. The gatherings were held in the Town Hall, which was packed every night about an hour before the time announced for commencing the service. The hall holds 3,000 people. The overflow meetings crowded the nearest places of worship. A service was also held on the steps of the Town Hall for the crowd that could not get into the Town Hall or into the overflow meetings. Mr. Morgan conducted Bible readings in one of the largest churches, and so great were the throngs that hundreds of people could not get near the doors. Among the special features of the mission there was a service for young men and young women employed in shops, commencing at 9.30 in the evening, Admission was by ticket, and the church was crowded. Great numbers of these people went into the inquiry-room. The gathering went on until 11 at night. Dock-yard services were held by ministers of the town, and crowded young people's meetings were conducted by Mr. Proctor, of Liverpool, an Anglican. An Anglican clergyman also assisted Mr. Morgan in the Town Hall. The mission was undoubtedly the most successful ever held in Portsmouth. As one of the workers said, it went down to the very roots of things.

SHEFFIELD.

The Wesleyans of the Brunswick Circuit, Sheffield, anticipated the Simultaneous Mission by one conducted by Rev. Thomas Cook, the Connexional Evangelist. Great enthusiasm was displayed by the workers. The gratifying results were no doubt largely increased by the public spirit, conducive to such enterprises, which has been created by the meetings and work for the Simultaneous Mission. Nearly three hundred persons passed through the inquiry rooms. At the invitation of the President Mr. Cook gave an address to the Committee of the Free Church United Mission.

In most of the important districts of the city special evangelistic services for the young were held, as preparatory to the meetings of the greater mission. The number of inquirers was over 1,000. In one case a whole family was brought to Christ through the conversion of a daughter. The services conducted by the President of the Sheffield Free Church Council, Mr. Edwin Richmond, were marked by special blessing and success.

An all-day prayer-meeting is certainly a unique thing in Sheffield, but the one on February 14th, in the Nether Chapel, for the Simultaneous Mission, realised the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. Promptly at 9 a.m. the President took the chair, and he was followed by a fresh conductor each hour, until twelve such periods had gone their round. Continuously through all those hours, except for the few moments of silent intercession as one leader gave place to another, the voice of prayer or song or speech was poured forth. There was no break, and there was no weariness. Some persons came in for a few minutes; others remained for hours; but the interest never flagged for a moment.

The meetings at Sheffield were conducted at thirty centres. The missioners included Rev. J. Wilson, Mr. G. R. Cairns, Rev. Charles Ingram, Rev. G. H. Turner, Rev. Andrew Allan, Rev. H. Carden, Rev. Harry Needham, Rev. T. Nicholson, Rev. J. T. Mateer, Rev. T. I. Stockley, Rev. W. Houghton, and Miss Jennie Street, of London. Many local ministers took part in the work. The services grew in interest nightly, and at all the centres increasing congregations were reported. Some of the centres experienced notable success. In addition to these services house-to-house visitation was extensively carried on. In some districts two and three visits were paid to every house; literature was left relating to the mission; and in most cases the Gospel message carried thither also. Meetings were held in many of the works, and in one instance a service was held within the precincts of a brewery. In some instances publicans allowed the bills announcing the services to be exhibited in their tap-rooms. In all cases the audience was very attentive. Meetings were held for cabmen and tramway employés, and a supper, followed by a "straight talk," was given to the men and their wives. Successful noon-day meetings were held at Nether Chapel. Everyone connected with the mission was abundantly encouraged. About 1,500 people professed conversion.

SWANSEA.

So much success attended the Simultaneous Mission that it was found necessary to continue it for several days beyond the date originally fixed for its conclusion. Services were held at six churches, at the two largest of which Rev. J. Grange Bennett, and Rev. A. E. Warr were the missioners. Several other places were well served by local ministers. A great blessing came to all the Churches, and such crowds attended the missions that the largest hall in the town had to be taken for Mr. Bennett's services, and even then hundreds were unable to obtain admission. The Grand Theatre was crowded at the Men's Meeting each Sunday afternoon, and after the first two or three days there was a constant stream of inquirers. The total number was largely over 1,000. Local continuations of the good work were carried out.

YORK.

The Rev. T. Ferrier Hulme, M.A., of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, was the missioner at York. The meetings held in the Festival Concert Rooms were remarkably well attended. When the service opened there was usually only a little vacant seating accommodation in the galleries. The Festival Concert Rooms accommodate 3,000 people. On Tuesday the missioner spoke to about 2,000 people at Messrs. Rowntree's Cocoa Works in the dinner hour, and on Thursday to about 500 in the North-Eastern Railway Works. On three nights after the service closed, Mr. Hulme, with more than 1,000 people, paraded the city, singing at various stations on the way. A "button-hole band" went about inviting people to the service prior to every evening meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON THE PROVINCIAL CAMPAIGN

The Rev. J. P. Perkins enjoyed great success at Warminster. Mr. Perkins has a special faculty for dealing with young people. The mission attracted the largest congregations that have been seen in the town for a long time.

The Rev. W. R. Sunman, ex-President of the United Methodist Free Churches, was the missioner at Alnwick. The devotional meetings in the afternoon gave wise instruction and spiritual refreshment. The attendance at all the services was good. "Street scouts" were sent out each day to invite people to the services.

The Rev. W. Knight Chaplin stirred up Andover in such a way as it has not been stirred for years. The Council here is quite young, and its first work was the mission.

The reports from Cambridgeshire were very cheering. The gatherings everywhere were crowded. Many hearts were touched and changed. The arrangements for the county were very complete, few even of the smaller villages being left unprovided for. There was an unprecedented drawing together of the ministers and members of different churches. A special feature of the work in Cambridge was the afternoon meetings for the infirm. Conveyances were provided to take them to the place of meeting and home again.

Yarmouth was greatly stirred. Mr. Charles Inglis had congregations which crowded the largest chapel in the town. Overflow meetings had to be held, and hundreds, many of whom were men, have been dealt with in the inquiry-rooms. Great interest was shown in the afternoon Bible readings, which were attended sometimes by as many as 800.

The mission in Trowbridge, where the Rev. Mathias Lansdown laboured, was a magnificent success. The Town Hall was crowded every night, and quite 300 gathered each day for Bible readings. Mr. Lansdown won the confidence of every church in the town. There were many decisions for Christ. The musical part of the services was assisted by a string band.

Bath was divided into seven districts. There were good attendances at all the centres. There was a largely-attended daily prayer meeting, and the other work included open-air preaching, children's services, women's meetings, and a gathering in the theatre.

The Rev. C. F. Aked enjoyed great success at Swindon. His meetings were crowded every night. Great interest was taken in the mid-day meetings for workmen. There were many who signed the temperance pledge, and also not a few conversions.

The Rev. J. A. Lee, of Liverpool, the missioner at Chippenham, was greatly helped by his wife. The work included Bible readings, children's services, noon-day meetings at the milk factory, foundry, tannery, and cloth factory. Many persons professed conversion.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bentinck, the missioner at Westbury, had successful services.

The services at the Town Hall, Salisbury, which accommodates 1,500 persons, were conducted by the Rev. H. J. Knight, of Peckham Rye Tabernacle, and were very well attended. All sorts of special meetings were held in connection with the mission.

Mr. R. S. Bradbrook's work at Alfreton was successful beyond all record. Nearly 100 persons, including some thirty scholars, professed conversion. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters were brought in together.

Rev. A. M. Gardener and Mrs. Gardener were the missioners at Dorchester. The meetings were first held in the Town Hall, but this soon became so overcrowded that the Corn Exchange, a place nearly twice the size, had to be taken. This, too, was so packed on the second Sunday of the mission that an overflow meeting was held in the Town Hall.

The Rev. Geo. Hooper's work at Nelson was a great success. Salem Chapel was crowded from floor to ceiling every night. The inquiry-rooms were thronged. The noon-day meetings for work-people were very successful.

The Burslem congregations on the first Sunday morning of the mission marched in procession to the Market Square, where a great meeting was held. A mission band worked in the streets every night. The Council invited the shop-keepers to an "At Home" on the early closing day. The Rev. F. C. Stuart was the missioner.

The Rev. C. Ensor Walters was the missioner at Sowerby Bridge. The Tuel Lane Methodist Free Church was frequently crowded to excess. The men's meeting was particularly successful. Mr. Walter's address on "Is life worth living" made a deep impression. The noon-day prayer meetings were well-attended, and chiefly by people who came in their working dress just for a few minutes in their dinner-hour. Nearly 300 persons were consecrated or re-consecrated.

At Doncaster the large Guildhall was filled every night. The Rev. G. P. Clark's services were very highly appreciated. Miss Clark helped greatly by her singing. Open-air meetings, at which a brass band assisted, were very successful.

Some of the tradesmen at Dronfield closed earlier than usual, in order to attend the services and to allow their employees to do so.

Two hundred converts were gathered-in at Rawmarsh. The Church of England shared in the blessing.

The Rev. T. Cook was very successful at Harrogate. One of the meetings was for young people attending the various boarding schools in the town, and more than a hundred of the pupils came forward as seekers of salvation.

The Memorial Hall, Chesterfield, which accommodates 1,200 people, was crowded from the first service during the mission of the Rev. Theophilus Parr, M.A. Mr. Parr has caused many young people to cross the line.

The Rev. J. Rorke was the missioner at Whitby. The services held in the shipyard for the working men were well attended.

The attendance at the Rev. A. Swift's meetings, at Malton, increased day by day. On the last Sunday evening the Wesleyan Chapel was densely packed by about 1,100 people.

The mission at Bolton, held in the Victoria Hall was attended by crowds. A correspondent writes: "When we sang the hymn 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' (the first three verses sitting), and when all were asked to rise and sing the last verse if they would make it their act of consecration, 3,000 rose. It was a scene never to be forgotten."

Liskeard and district organised ten village missions and one for the town, in which no fewer than 50 chapels were associated. Care was taken to secure for every mission chapel a missioner of a different denomination from that of the chapel. For Liskeard itself, a special missioner, the Rev. J. Leach, was secured, but all the rest of the work was done by ministers and laymen of the district.

Very full and careful preparations were made at Grays, Essex. A band of women visited every public-house before the evening meeting. One night the meeting had to be stopped and turned into a prayer-meeting, as one man could not go on any longer without giving vent to his feelings and crying for mercy.

There were large congregations at Birkenhead, in some cases overflowing to the Hotel Metropole. Many elder scholars entered the inquiry-rooms.

At Wigan, where the missioner was Mr. George Clarke, crowded meetings of over 2,000 persons were held each evening in the Guildhall, and about 600 inquirers were dealt with.

Many outsiders were reached by the services in Bold Street Wesleyan Chapel, Warrington, and the mission overflowed on the second Sunday evening into one of the largest theatres of the town.

The English services at Flint were conducted by Rev. A. Hallack, M.A., of Worcester, and the Welsh services by the Rev. Hugh Hughes, of Abergele. All the meetings were well attended, and many persons signified their intention of becoming church members. The united choir occasionally met in one of the squares of the town a short time before the evening services, and marched through the streets singing heartily.

Ardent enthusiasm was aroused by the mission at Mold, and all the services were well attended. The English services were conducted by the Rev. E. Cornwall Jones, of London.

The mission at Holywell was very successful. The services were held in Welsh for eight nights, and in English for two nights, at Rehoboth Chapel, the largest building in the town. Neighbouring ministers preached.

At New Brompton special invitations were distributed to policemen, soldiers, postmen, and dockyard employés, with good results. A lantern lecture entitled "The Sign of the Cross" was one of the chief features, being successful in reaching the outsiders. Four hundred tickets had been personally distributed, and there was a crowded attendance. The mission at New Brompton was conducted by Rev. D. J. Rounsefell, who has made a reputation at the old Victoria Theatre, London, where he has regularly congregations of 2,000.

There were two centres at Tunbridge Wells, worked by Rev. B. Senior, and Rev. J. Whittaker. The Bible readings of both missioners were largely attended. Many conversions were reported.

Meetings were held for all classes at Ashford, in Kent. At the Sunday services in the Corn Exchange there were the best attendances on record. Mr. McAuliffe was the missioner. One of the converts was a Roman Catholic, who found spiritual rest, after much perplexity, in the simple Protestant doctrine of justification by faith.

The Rev. J. W. Ewing, M.A., B.D., held the people at Canterbury spellbound. The most impressive services were those for young people, where young men were in the majority. Anglicans have attended and helped in the work.

The Rev. H. E. Stone drew crowds to the Dover Town Hall larger than could be got into any of the chapels. The delightful features of the missions were the dinner-hour services, held at the paper mills, when the employers kindly gave their workers an extra half-hour, and a large gathering of shop assistants.

Large numbers of outsiders were reached at Deal. A well-attended meeting for the men of the Royal Marines who are stationed here was held.

At Margate and Ramsgate theatre services were held on the Sundays, in each case with great success. In Ramsgate about 1,500 were present, whereas at the ordinary meetings in the week there were about 500. Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., of Eastbourne, held a meeting for shop-assistants. Mr. W. Olney was the missioner at Margate, and had very successful gatherings.

The missioners at Maidstone were Rev. J. Wills, Rev. G. P. McKay and others. They deeply stirred the hearts of the people. The congregations were the largest that have been seen in the town for many a long day. Never has such real unity prevailed among the Free Churches. A pleasant incident was an offer made by the Secretary of a Church of England assembly to have free use of a room for committee meetings during the mission.

The Rev. James Mursell was the missioner at Workington. The local arrangements were somewhat upset by the visits of Mr. Justice Darling and Mr. Justice Channell to try the Cockermouth Election Petition. They sat in the Duke Street hall, which had been rented by the Council. Owing to these circumstances the gatherings were held in the Congregational Church, and were very successful.

The Penrith Council, although it has been in existence only a few months, entered into the mission with great heartiness and secured the Rev. Carroll Myers, who conducted very successful services in the town.

The Rev. H. Elvet Lewis was the missioner at Pontypridd. The general mission was preceded by three days Welsh services. The Town Hall was crowded, and on the last Sunday evening many were turned away. It was the largest meeting ever held in the building.

Mr. Josiah Nix had a very successful mission at Redruth. The organisation was practically faultless, and was carried through under the direction of the Rev. J. F. Lawis. Wesley Chapel was crowded every night, and there was a great host of inquirers.

The results in Devon exceeded the most sanguine anticipations. Very large congregations assembled each night at Exeter, Torquay, Tiverton, Barnstaple, Bideford, Torrington, and South Molton. At Ilfracombe a remarkable work was done. Although the mission was conducted by the resident ministers without the aid of an outside missioner, the largest church was crowded each night, and more than a hundred persons professed conversion.

At Torquay visits to the police and railway stations, post-office, and the cab-stands secured a large attendance of men. At each service numbers went into the inquiry-room, not only from the Bible-classes and congregations, but also from those who did not attend any place of worship. Great meetings were held in the Royal Public Hall.

At Okehampton there were good meetings. Rev. J. Pritchard was the missioner. Young Christians showed great interest by singing through the streets night after night to bring in the people.

The meetings of the Rev. W. C. Rose, in Wesley Chapel, Stafford, were very well attended. Open-air services formed an important part of the work.

Evangelistic services were held in the Longton Sunday Schools in connection with the mission. Each day during the dinner hour the missioner, the Rev. J. Pickup, conducted services.

A shop assistants' social meeting was held in the Leek Town Hall. During the mission the building was frequently crowded to overflow. The Rev. W. Skinner was the missioner.

The ministers of Lowestoft themselves carried on the mission with encouraging results. Special attention was paid to the children.

Special meetings were held at Wymondham for workmen and railway men. The Rev. R. Dalby, of Midhurst, was the missioner.

The afternoon Bible readings at Stalham, conducted by the Rev. H. Kenward, were greatly appreciated.

Rev. E. J. Dukes was the missioner at St. Ives, Hunts. The evening meetings were held in the spacious Congregational Church. Afternoon Bible meetings were held ten times at the Primitive Methodist Church, a mass meeting of children at the Wesleyan Church, and two crowded meetings at the Corn Exchange. The mission was continued for a week beyond the arranged time.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell, B.A., of Brighton, was to have conducted the mission at Oxford, but the break-down of his health prevented this; and failing to secure the help of an outsider the Council elected the Rev. W. Bradfield, B.A., the resident Wesleyan Superintendent Minister, to lead the work. His services were highly appreciated, and the interest grew till, at the final meeting, the Town Hall was filled. A large number of inquirers came from the children's gathering, and several adults also professed conversion.

The Reading Mission went most successfully. The appointed missioner, the Rev. Charles Brown, of Hornsey, London, was prevented by illness from starting work until half-way through the mission, and at very short notice the Rev. F. J. Benskin, of Huddersfield, consented to fill his place for the first four nights, and rendered invaluable service by his vigorous and stirring addresses. Mr. Brown, although he came to the work in physical weakness, spoke with very great spiritual force, and a large number of persons were led to decision. The Town Hall, which accommodates about 2,000 people, was practically full every night, and on the second Sunday evening a crowded overflow meeting was held in the smaller Town Hall.

Captain A. McGill, of the Royal Artillery, North Shields, was the missioner at Birstall.

Miss Mary Barber preached at the Salem Congregational Church, Sunderland, in connection with the mission.

The Dean of Ripon (Dr. Fremantle) took part in the inaugural meeting of the Ripon mission.

The Rev. R. O. Johns, Dalston, was the missioner at Falmouth. One evening a touching scene took place in the chapel. The sermon had been on "Prepare to meet thy God." When the service was over, and the congregation were dispersing, sobbing began. One young woman, being under great conviction, was sobbing very much, when a lady worker knelt by her side and offered prayer; and a company gathered round and started the refrain "I need Thee; O, I need Thee," all kneeling whilst singing. A prayer was said aloud by another worker; that was followed by silent prayer by all. Presently the sobbing ceased, and the entire band struck up "Ring the bells of Heaven."

A meeting for children in the Temperance Hall, Middlesbro', was attended by over 2,000 people, and many could not get in. Open-air work was carried on by Christian Endeavourers, assisted by a brass band. The missioners from outside were the Rev. J. Fleming Shearer, Rev. J. H. Maddock, and Rev. J. Smyth Wood.

Dr. Crawford Johnson, of Belfast, conducted the central mission at Huddersfield. The meetings held in the Town Hall were a complete success.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., and Rev. J. M. Gwynne Owen rendered splendid service during the Kidderminster mission.

A correspondent writes: "We had a royal time at Crewe, 150 converts. Building too small. Splendid processions." The missioner was the Rev. A. T. Guttery. On leaving Crewe by the midnight train the Mayor, the ministers of the town, and a number of converts saw Mr. Guttery off.

At Barnstaple the members of the Y.M.C.A. and the Wesleyan Mission Band undertook the open-air meetings and parades. Special services were held at the factories. Rev. J. N. Knight, Birmingham, was the missioner.

At the South Cliff, Scarborough, there was a nightly procession consisting of men one evening and women the next. They walked in single file and were accompanied by children carrying Chinese lanterns. Services were held in the model lodging-houses.

Colonel Plummer, late Governor of Parkhurst Prison, conducted the mission services at Buckfastleigh.

Miss Ada Ward, the converted actress, was the missioner at Newport, Isle of Wight. She had crowded congregations.

Some laymen, in connection with the Anglican Church, helped in the mission at Lewes.

At Eastbourne a procession, with illuminated cars, marched through the town every night. The Town Hall was crowded at every service and hundreds were frequently turned away.

The 24 villages near Cheltenham had their mission from February 3rd to 7th. It was a week of snow, sleet, and rain, but notwithstanding the long journeys over hills, not one of the 111 appointments was unfulfilled.

Several lads in khaki (13th Hussars) decided for Christ at the last services of the Colchester mission. Four days later they left for the front.

The most glorious successes were realised in the villages of Northumberland and Durham. In one small village 117 inquirers came forward. In the village of Sacriston, at one of the first services, 74 adult scholars went forward. In another village 100 seekers for salvation were enumerated in connection with the preliminary prayer-meetings. A policeman watching the interests of the mission in one place was stricken with conviction, found mercy, and publicly praised God. An Irish Roman Catholic in another place was converted, and wished his mother to be told that he had seen the Lord Jesus as he had never seen Him before. Pitmen were converted in the mines while being prayed for by their Christian mates.

A striking feature of the work at Ferndale, Pontypridd, was the prominent part taken in it by women. Girls and women who were previously too retiring even to recite a verse in public, came forward at these meetings uninvited, except by the Spirit, and offered searching prayers. They prayed for themselves, their husbands, their fathers, and their children. Rev. Rice Owen, Chairman of the South Wales Wesleyan Synod, said that these scenes were exactly what he remembers to have witnessed during the great revival of 1859.

The midnight service at Driffield was very successful. Two processions marched through the town singing, each headed by a score or more of persons carrying Chinese lanterns on long poles.

The mission at Newport, Mon., was most successful. Crowds assembled night after night. The missioners were Mr. and Mrs. Evens.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE MISSION.

Mr. T. H. Bainbridge.

The Simultaneous Mission in Newcastle has been a great and undoubted success. The meetings have been of the most varied description—preaching services on the Sabbaths and week-nights, mass meetings for men, special meetings for women, P.S.A.

meetings, and other agencies for collecting the general public—and in every instance the congregations have been large and appreciative, and, in some cases, the places of worship have been crammed.

Spiritual results of the most gratifying nature have resulted in each of the mission centres. The careless and unconverted have been awakened and led to decision, and the youth of our Bible classes have, in many instances, been led to declare themselves openly and actively for Christ.

The fact that very large numbers of our ordinary congregations and of professed Christians have attended all the services will have been productive of immense spiritual benefit in intensifying of religious convictions, and the dedication, in an increased degree, of individual lives to spiritual service.

Amongst the general results for good which may become permanent may be mentioned the system of house-to-house visitation, and the retention of those areas for permanent church operations.

I may add, on reliable authority, that all the centres have had crammed congregations at their principal services, and that in no instances have the audiences been other than large and most attentive.

It is obvious to remark, that if so much blessing has resulted from this ten days' mission, more striking and more permanent benefits would follow an effort of longer duration, say fourteen days: and that a repetition of the mission in, say, four or five years, would, from every point of view, be a wise expedient.

The ministers of the various Free Churches have attended the united services at the various centres and taken part in them: and in this aspect alone, so many independent centres of influence being brought within the "swirl" of the evangelistic influence, the result upon all the Free Church congregations of the district must be regarded as highly beneficial to their spiritual life and work.

The outstanding lesson of the movement is, that God reserves a special blessing for united spiritual effort.

I conclude by a quotation from a letter received from Mr. William Angus, J.P., who is connected with the Westgate Road Baptist Church, and who is so widely known throughout the district. "There has in my experience been no religious movement since the time of Moody and Sankey to compare with it, and in some respects this strikes me as more impressive than even that. One thing that strikes me is the absolute harmony of the four denominations united in our centre; I have not heard a whisper of friction or jealousy. Our congregations have been very large and very regular, and it has been remarkable that at least three-fourths of the people present have stayed to the after meetings. Last night we had 1,250 people packed into a church comfortably seated for 850: at least 1,000 stayed to the after meeting. There has been no outward excitement, but earnest attention, and often absolute and impressive silence. The response to the missioner's appeal for expression of a desire to live the Christian life has been exceedingly encouraging. If the promise comes to fruit our Sunday schools and churches will to a large extent be revolutionised."

Mr. Percy W. Bunting, M.A.

I think there is no doubt of the success of the Simultaneous Mission. Judging both from report and from experience I am sure it has been an occasion of true and deep spiritual revival. It is said that, compared with the efforts put forth, a comparatively small number of persons, hitherto not religious, has been brought into communion with the churches or the Saviour: let it be so. The central force in religion is the religion of the Church: it is through human sympathy that Christianity is mainly spread; the Christian life is more potent than the Christian speech; and the heightened vigour of the faithful is the necessary condition of the growth of faith. If the Church live the world will believe. The mission has undoubtedly been a great movement of the Church; it must result in both wider and more spiritual effort, and heighten that subtle influence which works upon the spirit of the world.

It is very good, too, that the Free Church Council has taken up this mission as its first great national work. Of late years the Church has felt strongly its responsibilities in matters of social reform, of the resistance to common vices, of philanthropy, of the consecration of the national life—things in which earnest Christians act not alone, but join with all well-meaning citizens—and touch upon political issues. All the more reason is there that Christians should refresh their own spiritual tone; all the more necessity that the Church should, by example, teach the nation that the soul of all reform, the strength of every nation, lies in faith, obedience, and worship of the living God, and the Redeemer whom he has sent.

Mr. George Cadbury.

The hearts of true Christians of all denominations must rejoice to see that the Church again is devoting its powers to the bringing of men to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which should always have been its main object. Those who have seen the marvellous change in the hearts and homes of those who have passed from death unto life will rejoice exceedingly in the number of converts during the mission, but I hope this will be the least important of its results. It has opened the eyes of earnest Christian men and women to the wretched condition of millions in our land without God. Where there is a Free Church Council in active operation the forces become more like a well-officered army instead of an undisciplined rabble. No great permanent effects will be produced on the country except by each church taking its own parish and working it vigorously.

The country has suffered because Christian men and women have not been at work; the churches have suffered because work has not been found for them to do, and like a limb unused they have become helpless. That individual and that church only will be filled with all peace and joy in believing which unselfishly devotes itself to the good of others.

REV. J. FLANAGAN.

I am writing this while in the midst of the Cradley Heath Mission. The ministers say that the meetings are making a deep impression on the town and neighbourhood. Last night the inquiry-room was filled. It was a beautiful sight to see mothers weeping over their children, wives over husbands, and companions over friends. The grey-haired man and the child knelt at the feet of Jesus. The meetings were held in Christ Church (Methodist New Connexion). The meetings have been crowded. At the later stages, aisles and every inch of standing-room were occupied. I cannot give you numbers. No statistics can include full spiritual results. But both here and in Central London, where I was missioner, the services, so far as I have been able to judge, have been very satisfactory.

One of the most gratifying features of my meetings has been the ready response of the working men and women to attend a special meeting at noon. In Central London, under the guidance of the resident ministers, the working people came in hundreds. Here at Cradley Heath we invited the chain-makers and others to a twenty-minutes' service, the time to be taken out of their dinner-hour. Some of the ministers and workers were doubtful as to results, knowing the character of the men we appealed to. To the astonishment of all, hundreds accepted the invitation, and each day the numbers have increased. It seems that the working classes are waiting for the ministry which will adapt itself to their needs.

REV. DR. MONRO GIBSON.

At the refreshment room of the Waverley Station, *en route* for Aberdeen, I find my only opportunity of responding to the Secretary's request to give a few impressions of the work of the Simnltaneous Mission in Newcastle, where I have been for the last week. What strikes me specially is the completeness of the arrangements and the comprehensiveness of the work. The reports which have reached me from the evening meetings in the various centres have been most encouraging, not only in points of number in attendance, but in the bringing of many to decision; but I have been even more interested in the special meetings which have been so liberally provided for—meetings for men, meetings for women, open-air meetings, meetings in factories, meetings in "the Bigg Market," meetings for out-of-works, meetings for business men &c. The last-mentioned were entrusted to me, so I can report more particularly on them. They were held in the Connaught Hall, alternating with meetings for receiving reports of missioners from the various centres. The hall was completely filled on the floor, and the gallery nearly full also; and I certainly never had an audience which it was more an inspiration to address.

So far as I could observe, there has been throughout Newcastle the same feeling of general sympathy with the movement which was so noteworthy in London. The press also has given excellent reports, and has dealt with the subject in a friendly spirit. In the paper which I brought with me this morning from Newcastle there are four leaderettes on the mission, and an appreciation of nearly a column by a "special commissioner." The fourth leaderette speaks of the interest which members of the Anglican Church are taking in the mission. Of this I have myself had experience. On the whole, however, it is my conviction that the chief value of the work will be found to have been the quickening and stimulating of the churches, and setting the evangelistic key for their future activity. This is not a work of a week or two, but the work of the century.

Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A.

We began our mission at Cambridge on the Sunday afternoon, when the Guildhall was crowded with young people. Mr. Barber, of the Leys school, gave a very helpful address. At night the large hall was densely thronged, and an overflow meeting was held in the small hall. The attendance all through the week was marvellous. Every night, despite the appalling weather, the hall was full, and towards the end of the week many could not get in. The singing by a large united choir was all that could be desired. There was a large demand for the pledge-cards, and every evening, at the after meeting, all who could do so joined in repeating the simple but comprehensive confession. On Friday night the number of inquiries was large, and I have received numbers of letters. No arrangement for Bible readings had been made, but I announced one for each afternoon, and towards the end of the week we had nearly 400 people in the small hall. The meeting for University men was hastily got up, but it was decidedly a success, the attendance and the spirit being very encouraging. I also had the pleasure of addressing the boys of the Leys school. All sections united heartily in the effort; and the preparatory work of visitation had been thoroughly done. To reach the workmen we sent out special bills in the middle of the week, and there was an instantaneous response. Altogether the mission at Cambridge was a very memorable and fruitful time.

Rev. Dr. Horton.

I have seen the mission at close quarters in my own parish of Hampstead, and in the busy and prosperous town of Halifax. In each place there has been enough to make the most captious critic certain that the mission was needed, and has been fruitful in results. In each place many have been gathered in—in Hampstead largely through the quickened life of the Church; in Halifax largely through the energy and devotion of the ministers and Sunday school teachers. In each place the unity of the denominations has been amazing. There seemed no consciousness of effort in coming together, but only the surprised recognition that we actually were one. It is no idle phrase when we speak of the Free Church of England. It is the simple description of a *fait accompli.* There are no divisions in the Free Church such as those which stain the Anglican Church. There is nothing in the Free Church corresponding to the antipathies of the Jesuits and Franciscans in the Roman Church. The way of ultimate unity opens before us. It is the way of faith in Christ as the one test and groundwork of the Church of Christ.

Two things, however, the mission has impressed upon me:—

1. To reach the masses of the outsiders the services should be held in neutral buildings. It is not the Christian truth or the Christian Church that repels the people, but the Christian building and the conventionalities which have gathered about it.

2. The missioner, or evangelist, is a distinct office, implying a distinct charisma or spiritual gift.

The prophet, the pastor, the teacher, may quite conceivably not be a missioner. On the other hand, a man without theological training, with little or no education, and without graces of style and diction, may be gifted with that most glorious spiritual power of drawing souls to Christ.

The Free Church should recognise the order of evangelist—should seek out, equip, and send forth such evangelists as the spirit endows. Along with the steady work of the pastors and teachers, the work of the evangelists should be carried on in every town and village.

REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

The mission was carried on in every part of the country with quite remarkable success. The work in London, unprecedented as it was, was surpassed by the results in provincial cities and towns. In every part of the land, immense missions were conducted with the most encouraging and gratifying results. It may be perfectly correct that we have not got at the unreached majority of the people directly and immediately. Nor could such a consummation as that be expected by any reasonable person. The mere fact that all the great Evangelical Free Churches of this country were able to lay every denominational object and interest on one side and to combine together in a common endeavour to bring multitudes of men into personal relations with the Divine Lord, is one of the most hopeful events that has ever happened in Christian history. It marks the beginning of a new era. The more intimately Christian Churches combine in this way, in the common service of Christ, the more strength will they have to repeat such united enterprises and to undertake others involving even more complete co-operation. We now possess in every part of the Kingdom, a permanent organisation ready whenever necessary to unite for common ends without the least interference with that denominatioal autonomy which answers such admirable ends.

Now that the churches have been aroused everywhere we must not allow them to fall asleep again, or to be careless. The good start we have made must be followed up in every direction. We must never rest until all the people of this country have been persuaded to attach themselves to some branch of the Christian Church. The experiences of the mission have shown that—with proper zeal and appropriate methods—the people may be reached; that the enterprise is a much simpler and easier one than our doubts and fears have been in the habit of acknowledging; that there is, on the part of the general community, no serious prejudice against Christianity,and that, as a matter of fact, if we fail to evangelise England, it will be our own fault.

REV. DR. MACKENNAL.

For a long time my impression that, in undertaking the Simultaneous Mission, we were beginning a work we should not be able to drop, has been gathering form and force. I reflected that most of those to whom we were hoping to preach the Gospel had already been taught it in our schools and churches; and the question followed —why have they refused our message? To my mind there is but one answer—it is not our methods which have failed; it is that the churches have not caught and represented the ethical ideal of the Lord. By discussing whether the Sermon on the Mount was a possible law on earth, instead of learning from it how to live, we have awakened the suspicion that our own belief in Christ is not thorough. I have not been surprised that, of the large congregations which the mission has gathered, only a small percentage of "out-siders" has been anywhere observed. But I have been touched and solemnised at the intensity of devout and earnest feeling in the congregations. The desire to be holy has probably never been deeper and more vividly diffused than these missions have revealed it to be now. If that desire become a purpose to follow Christ everywhere—to have no other rule than His in personal, social, and material life—there will be such a revival as England has never known. What I have seen and heard of the Simultaneous Mission encourages me to hope it may be so.

REV. J. GREGORY MANTLE.

In my judgment, by far the greatest good accomplished by the Simultaneous Mission has been the unmistakable manifestation of unity, not in Committee only, but in actual conflict. To stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight with those who impressed you more and more deeply with their true comradeship is an experience as unique as it is unforgettable. It has often been complained that the motto over the platform of a certain Convention, "All one in Jesus Christ" is only true of the Convention, and that in ordinary Christian work it breaks down. There is some truth in the complaint.

Lest it should ever be said that we are all one in a great and glorious campaign, like that just closed, but that our oneness ceases to manifest itself in ordinary church activities, let the Committees be kept in existence, and utilised on every possible occasion to keep this spirit of comradeship in evidence. There is the more reason for this, as what has been attempted has been largely experimental. The lessons learned during the last fortnight are lessons only learned in actual warfare, and will be simply invaluable in the next campaign, which should be conducted in the theatres and music halls of the country.

REV. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN.

I am anxious to do anything I can to assist you in your work. At the same time it seems to me rather a difficult thing for a missioner to give his impression of the Simultaneous Mission. Yet, of course, one has impressions and convictions. I have taken part in the London Mission at the East Finchley Centre and at Ferme Park, and am now in the midst of the work at Portsmouth. My own conviction concerning the work is that its very best result will be the new interest aroused in our churches in directly evangelical work, and a new sense of responsibility coming to all the people of God. The part of the work that has impressed me most deeply in my own case has been the very large gatherings both at Ferme Park and at Portsmouth, for the Bible readings which I have conducted. In each case the buildings, capable of seating about 1,200 people, have been crowded, and at Portsmouth very many have been turned away. I believe that all over the country the churches have been quickened into new life, and while I thank God for the number of outsiders that have been reached, I value most highly this movement within the church, not simply for its own sake, but because I believe it to be the forerunner of a mighty evangelistic campaign all over the country.

Mr J. Compton Rickett, M.P.

It is yet early to estimate accurately the work of the national mission of the Free Churches. The brush is hardly dry, and we are too close to the canvas. In some districts there is an impression that regular churchgoers formed a larger portion than was anticipated, but then I am reminded that many churchgoers, like the Apostle Peter, need a second conversion. The effect of the mission may even now be spreading silently through masses of the people, apparently untouched by the first direct appeal. But the missioners have done much more than rouse religious men and women to vital service. A great company all over the country have listened to the Word and have believed. One thing appears assured, evangelical preaching has spoken afresh with the note of doctrine as having authority. Not easily, we may hope, will it lose that tone. Sacerdotal authority should be excelled by the authority of the evangelical deliverance, The ethical teaching of the Gospel is a soft stealing vapour, that mist which watered the whole face of the garden of the Lord. For the tillers of the hard soil, however, beyond the garden gates, truth must sometimes gather into a thunder-cloud. Repentance, salvation, sanctification, those old voices from Heaven, have spoken again, and have not lost their ancient significance. Let it be, however, the task of our teachers in the future to restate our recovered evangelical doctrine in terms of "sweet reasonableness" for those whose souls have been set aglow by its message.

Rev. Dr. Townsend.

The mission at Hanley, at which I was engaged, has left a very delightful impression upon my mind. It was a fine display of the entire union and brotherhood existing among the Free Churches. The ministers and their people wrought with such willingness, and displayed so thorough an absence of sectarian spirit, as to be an object lesson to the town of Christian love and co-operation. Then the readiness of everyone to do whatever he could, and the way that ministers and people alike placed themselves at the service of the missioner, made the work, though arduous in itself, very pleasant and happy.

As to the services and their results it is difficult to speak impartially. The Sunday congregations were very large, being over 1,500 in each case; the week-night attendances were also excellent, running from 600 to 700. The early morning meetings, and the afternoon Bible readings, filled the schoolroom of Bethesda Church, and were characterised by deep spiritual feeling. The large services were manifestly moved upon by the Holy Ghost, as sometimes not more than twenty or thirty people went out from the after meeting. There was a large band of inquiry-room workers, and it was deeply interesting to look into the inquiry-rooms and see them, with quietness and deep earnestness, Bible in hand, instructing the inquirers. The hush of the rooms, where yet so much good work was going on, was most impressive. I have not the exact numbers who passed through these rooms, but there were certainly 400 or upwards.

The mission has failed to reach the outsiders to any large extent, although a few publichouse *habitués* were drawn into the inquiry-rooms. But the mass of the converts were undoubtedly the undecided members of the congregations, and the young people of the Sunday schools. If these can be retained they will be a great factor in a mission to the masses in the near future, and perhaps such an infusion of new life was needed to strengthen the churches for their duty in this respect. Of one thing I am more than ever convinced by the mission, that the Free Churches of England have within themselves latent resources and undeveloped strength which, if drawn into active operation, would enable them to play an immeasurably greater part than they are now doing for the regeneration of the nation and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

REV. THOMAS WAUGH.

I feel sure from what I see and hear that the Simultaneous Mission will prove to be a great blessing to the churches, and through them to the world outside. In bringing the Free Churches together for the first work of the Christian Church, it is a blessed object-lesson to outsiders, and must impress them in the right way. As such work always blesses those who heartily enter into it, the mission is being made a great blessing to the members and workers in the churches. In some cases the ministers have been at first bewildered, and strange in the work. In leading them into direct sympathy with and fitness for direct preaching and dealing with the souls of men, to such brethren the mission is a godsend.

In every place nearly, where proper arrangements have been made, the blessing to the Church has reached and saved vast numbers of unsaved church-going people. Though in London the 3,000,000 "go-nowheres," were hardly touched, they are being reached in the Provinces, and a great harvest is being reaped for God. Have just closed at Preston; 325 seekers, 300 of them adults, and a host of young men amongst them.

MR. ROBERT WHYTE.

Our experience, in a Central London parish, of the first Free Church Simultaneous Mission has been such as to call forth deep thankfulness to God; to awaken in us a deeper sense of responsibility; and to kindle in our hearts a lively expectation of better things to come.

Thankfulness first: and for how much! That pastors and office-bearers of neighbouring congregations that have stood apart till now because they belonged to different "bodies" have found out at last that they really are "one in Christ Jesus"—one not only in faith and love, but for counsel and in service. And that not pastors only, but their congregations too, have been drawn together. They have prayed together, they have been swayed together by the same deep spiritual emotion in the services in which they have sat side by side; they have worked together on a common plan, for one end; they have given thanks together for prayers answered, for hopes fulfilled. How can they be strangers any more? The Free Church Council is no longer only a Committee of Church Leaders. The rank and file have been through a campaign together, and are comrades now.

And, doubtless, in other districts as in ours, there has been cause for thankfulness for a fresh experience of the faithfulness of God. Prayers of faith have been answered. Labours of love have not been in vain in the Lord. The invitations given were accepted; the people came. Every night throughout the mission from six to seven hundred people listened to the Gospel message—largely, of course, members of the associated congregations, but largely, too, strangers to us and to all the churches. Those who were bidden did not all make excuse. And, though our inquiry-room work was not what some hoped for, still, there were such results in the gathering-in of some who were out of the way, in the quickening of dead souls, in the return of backsliders, and in the reviving of first love in some believing hearts that have grown cold, as shall endure throughout eternity, and call now for thankful praise.

But the very success of the work lays on us new responsibilities. Responsibility is to be measured by our ability to answer God's call. He asks no more; we dare not offer less. And this first Simultaneous Mission has shown us in our parish that our ability is greater than we knew. Churches, too long standing aloof from each other, can join in single-hearted effort to advance the Kingdom of God. Their union in service does awaken enthusiasm among their members. Their united efforts are owned of God, and do not fail of fruit. And since this is so, this first Simultaneous Mission must become a starting point. We dare not now wait for the beginning of another new century before we make a fresh united effort to win London, England, to the knowledge of the Gospel and the love of Christ. We must use soon, and use without ceasing, the power God has revealed to us. Summer is on us with its opportunities for open-air work, and tent work, and sea-side work. Shall we not unite again for these? Nor is it too soon to begin to plan again for next winter's campaign in every parish. We are better equipped now. We know that we can trust each other; and "the best of all is," as John Wesley said, that we know that "God is with us."

THE PRESS.

We cannot close our brief account of this great enterprise without a word of most hearty thanks to the Press for the full and accurate reports which were given of the mission everywhere, and for the sympathetic tone in which the mission was discussed in the leading columns. Practically every paper in the country printed editorials on the mission. Never has the Press of this land devoted so much space to a religious movement as it did to the Simultaneous Mission. The Free Churches are deeply indebted to the newspaper editors of England for the invaluable aid given to our enterprise in their columns.

CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

It is a source of great satisfaction to be able to record that this important branch of the National Council's work still maintains its position in the esteem of the Councils, notwithstanding that many circumstances have combined during the past year to greatly interfere with the regular issue of books.

The enormous pressure in all departments occasioned by the requirements of the Councils in connection with the Simultaneous Mission, is mainly responsible for the partial dislocation, and, for a time, the practical suspension of the re-issue of boxes.

Ministers, local preachers, and other workers associated with Free Church Councils all over the Kingdom, welcome with much enthusiasm the privileges of our library; sometimes, indeed, manifesting impatience at delay, which is rendered unavoidable, owing to preference being given to those rural districts still unprovided with literature of the best kind.

Area of Circulation.

As an example of the ground already covered, it may be mentioned that one of the boxes has circulated in Worcestershire, Norfolk, Derbyshire, Herts, Somerset, Lincolnshire, South Wales, Yorkshire, and Cornwall; and that another box has circulated in Monmouthshire, Kent, Norfolk, Dorset, Denbigh, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Derbyshire, and Rutland; a third has circulated in Flintshire, Huntingdonshire, Yorkshire, Cornwall, Notts, Cambs, and Essex; a fourth box has circulated in Yorks, Durham, Cornwall, Suffolk, Norfolk, Herts, Cambs, Shropshire, Cheshire, and Lancs; while all the other boxes are constantly in circulation among the Councils of England, Wales, and the Channel Islands in the same way.

Contents.

The boxes are continually undergoing revision as to their contents and additions are made from time to time. At the present time each box has an assortment of between fifty and sixty volumes, the works of the best authorities and most prominent writers of the day in the various departments of Biblical Exposition, Missionary Enterprise, Theology, Biography, Temperance, and other literature of the highest standard.

Methods of Circulation.

Some interesting correspondence in the *Free Church Chronicle* called attention to the methods adopted by local librarians in their endeavours to make the best use of this Library. In some Councils a Reading Circle is formed, and the books are passed round among the members; in other cases the box is deposited in a convenient central place—as a vestry or schoolroom—and the librarian attends for the exchange of books at stated times; or, again, the librarian has the box at his own residence, and exchanges the volumes as often as necessary. If an enterprising Free Churchman who has a place of business in a central position is appointed librarian, this latter plan has been found very convenient.

We may here instance a few of the expressions of warm gratitude and hearty appreciation that have been received.

Appreciation.

"Thanking you and your Federation for the loan, which we find does a great deal of good."

"We add our little tribute of thanks to swell the great torrent. They are a great boon."

"This branch of the Council's work is much appreciated. We thank you heartily, and shall be glad of another box."

"A great pleasure and profit to local preachers, ministers, and others."

"We have greatly appreciated the privilege of having the Library, and every book has been out."

"Please accept thanks for this supply of good literature."

"They have been much praised."

"My fellow-workers are longing for another box of books. This part of the Council's work is, perhaps, the most appreciated down here."

"A splendid set: will suit the folks here admirably."

"Highly prized. A real boon to us in this country place to have such a store of good literature."

"They have been widely read."

"The good they are doing cannot be measured."

"The books have been thoroughly enjoyed."

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

It is gratifying to be able to report that this part of our work has met with most remarkable success during the past year. Our publications have now an increasing market, not only throughout the whole of England and Wales, but on the Continent, in the Colonies, and in other parts of the world. One cheering feature is the interest shown by our local Secretaries and the members of the local Councils generally. They recognise that the .publications issued from this department are designed to help them in their work, and that they are part of the concern. The result is that scarcely a meeting of the Literature Committee has been held without suggestions from our constituency being considered. Some of these suggestions were very valuable, and have been carried out. It is scarcely necessary to say that we always welcome practical suggestions. At many of the Free Church gatherings held throughout the country our literature has been on sale. We have thus been able to introduce our publications to many people whom we could not have reached through the ordinary trade channels. We take this opportunity of most heartily thanking our Secretaries for their help.

It is impossible within the limits of this Report to deal with each publication separately, but a review of some of the more prominent may be of interest.

Free Church Hymnal.

First, from the numerical standpoint, must be mentioned our *Free Church Mission Hymnal.* This Hymnal was first issued in November, and up to the end of January nearly one million and a-quarter copies had been sold. The Hymnal, which is an enlargement of the *Halfpenny Mission Hymnal,* was prepared by a special Committee of the National Council, under the editorship of Rev. W. J. Townsend, D.D. In its preparation, some of the most successful evangelists of the time rendered service in selecting hymns and sacred songs. Owing to the limited space necessitated by the price of the Hymnal, and by the operation of the law of copyright, some well-known hymns have had to be omitted. The book was specially prepared for use in connection with the National Simultaneous Mission. The greatest possible care has been exercised in tracing the hymns to their origin, and in seeking permission, where needful, for their use. The price of the Hymnal is one halfpenny. It contains 149 hymns and 23 choruses.

Free Church Tune Book.

A Tune Book containing music (old notation or tonic sol-fa) and words of the *Mission Hymnal* has also been issued at the following prices:—Paper covers, 1s.; limp cloth, 1s. 6d.; cloth boards, red edges, 2s; cloth boards, gilt edges, 2s. 6d. This Tune Book has given much satisfaction, and has had a very large sale.

"The Call of God."

Amongst other literature which was issued in connection with the Simultaneous Mission was a unique volume of sermons entitled "The Call of God." A thousand copies were sold immediately on publication. This volume contains evangelistic addresses delivered by Rev. Dr. Barrett, Rev. F. W. Bourne, Rev. Dr. Brook, Rev. R. J. Campbell, B.A., Rev. W. Knight Chaplin, Rev. Dr. Clifford, Rev. W. Cuff, Rev. James Flanagan, Rev. Dr. Monro Gibson, Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., Rev. Dr. Horton, Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., Rev. Charles Inwood, Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., Rev. H. Elvet Lewis, Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, Rev. Dr. Parker, Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, Rev. Dr. Townsend, Rev. Thos. Waugh, Mr. W. R. Lane, and Mr. Gipsy Smith. The price, bound in cloth boards, 320 pp., is 3s. 6d.

"All Things New."

The little booklet, entitled "All Things New," written by Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, was also published for distribution to new converts after the mission. It has had a large sale.

Free Church Catechism.

The Free Church Catechism has had a sale of 110,000 during the year, making a total sale of 300,000 since it was first issued in January, 1899. The editions published in Welsh, Italian, and other languages, have met with a constantly growing demand.

"Free Churchman."

Our localised magazine, the "Free Churchman," has maintained its place in the front rank of localised magazines. Communications are constantly being received at the Central Office as to its usefulness amongst the Councils and Churches. Amongst the places where it is now localised may be mentioned: Ipswich, Sowerby Bridge, Swinton, Nottingham, Stroud, Stratford-on-Avon, Salisbury, Taunton, Dursley, Launceston, Preston, Elland, Peterborough, Truro, Worthing, Wirksworth, Tyldesley, Bodmin, Redruth, North Walsham, Stow-on-the-Wold, Plymouth, Preston, Alcester, Market Drayton, St. Leonards, Manchester, Guildford, Barry Dock, Stoke-on-Trent, Brixham, Marlborough, Northampton, Rugby, Norwich, Birmingham, Eastbourne, St. Albans, Braintree, Bingley, Wadebridge, Bath, Boston, Sudbury, Loughborough, Wellington, Westminster, Wolverhampton, Sacriston, Llandrindod Wells, Chesterfield, Plymouth, Colne, Northwich, Wharfedale, Louth, Cheltenham.

Free Church Chronicle.

As the organ of the Federation Movement, the *Free Church Chronicle* has rendered valuable service during the year. By means of it our Secretaries and members of local Councils are enabled to keep in touch with the Federation Movement both at home and abroad, while Free Churchmen generally find it of great interest as a record of the Free Church life and thought of the times. The most distinguished men in Nonconformity are among its contributors.

The following list of some of the regular features of the Magazine will give some idea of the ground it covers.

ILLUSTRATED SKETCHES OF WELL-KNOWN FREE CHURCHMEN, including those who hold high positions in Municipal and Parliamentary life.
ILLUSTRATED ACCOUNTS OF THE DISTRICT FEDERATIONS.
SYMPOSIUMS ON SUBJECTS OF PRESSING INTEREST TO FREE CHURCHMEN.
POPULAR EXPOSITIONS OF FREE CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND TEACHING.
POWDER AND SHOT:
  Useful Material for Speakers, and for all Free Churchmen who desire to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them.
SECRETARIES' PAGE: A Sketch every month of a Local Secretary, together with hints and suggestions useful to all Secretaries.
NEWS OF THE COUNCILS. NOTES FROM THE PROVINCES.
CHRONICLE CHAT. REVIEWS OF BOOKS.
ILLUSTRATED ACCOUNTS OF SPECIAL WORK DONE BY THE COUNCILS.
FULL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROGRESS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S ENTERPRISES, such as:
  The Free Church Girls' Guild, Free Church Provision for the Villages, Free Church Continental Chaplaincies, &c.
INTERESTING ACCOUNTS OF FEDERATION ABROAD.
&c. &c. &c. &c.

The *Chronicle* is published on the 25th of each month. The price is 2d. monthly, or 3s. per annum, post free.

Free Church Year Book.

One of the most useful publications issued by the National Council is the *Free Church Year Book.* It is now recognised as the standard book of reference for Free Churchmen. The following list of contents for 1900 will give some idea of the varied information contained in the *Year Book:—*

I.

VERBATIM REPORTS OF THE SERMONS AND PAPERS GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL COUNCIL.
NAMES OF REPRESENTATIVES.
NAMES OF PERSONAL MEMBERS.

II.

FREE CHURCH INFORMATION.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR.
HISTORY OF THE FREE CHURCH FEDERATION MOVEMENT.
LIST OF FREE CHURCH COUNCILS AND SECRETARIES.
DISTRICT FEDERATIONS.
FREE CHURCH STATISTICS OF ENGLAND AND WALES.
  Church Accommodation. — Communicants. — Sunday-School Teachers.—Sunday Scholars.—Ministers actually at Work.—Local Preachers.
COMMUNICANTS OF ESTABLISHED AND NON-ESTABLISHED CHURCHES.
NATIONAL EDUCATION.
INTERNATIONAL FIGURES.
  Methodists.—Baptists.—Presbyterians.—Congregationalists.
COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS.
COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.
SCOTLAND.
TRAINING COLLEGES OPEN TO FREE CHURCHMEN.
FREE CHURCH SECONDARY SCHOOLS.
MINISTERIAL COLLEGES.
SETTLEMENTS.
FREE CHURCH ORGANISATIONS.
ADDRESSES OF OFFICIALS OF FREE CHURCH DENOMINATIONS.

Other Publications.

Amongst other publications which are in continual demand besides those mentioned, are *Hymn Sheets* for public meetings. These have had, since they were first issued, a sale of 120,000 copies: the story of *Gipsy Smith's Career*, which is on sale at all Mr. Smith's missions, and of which 40,000 have been sold: and our Twentieth Century Leaflets, which have been very popular for advertising the meetings, mission, &c., of the local Councils. The series of *Free Church Tracts for the Times* have also had a steady sale, while the booklets on *Oliver Cromwell*, and *The Relation of Municipal Action to Morals*, have also been in constant demand.

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OF THE

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Balch, Rev. A. E., M.A.
Bath, Mr. A. E.
Baulkwell, Mr. W. R. K.
Beavan, Mr. W. T.
Bertram, Mr. and Mrs. W.
Bird, Mr. C. H.
Birney, Mr. H.
Birney, Mrs. E. S.
Brain, Rev. Geo.
Brainsly, Rev. A. T.
Brown, Mr. and Mrs. J.
Bryan, Mrs. C.
Butcher, Mr. Geo.
Cooper, Mrs. F.
Daniel, Mr. H.
Davies, Mr. G.
Davies, Rev. N. W.
Davis, Rev. J. M., B.A.
Davis, Rev. D. M.
Davis, Mr. D. C.
Day, Mrs.
Day, Miss, and Miss S. J.
Dodd, Mr. T.
Dodsworth, Rev. T.
Edwards, Mr. J. Hugh
Elvey, Rev. R. A.
Evan, Rev. J. C.
Evans, Mrs. J.
Evans, Mr. and Mrs.
Evans, Mr. G. K.
Fifoot, Mrs.
Findlay, Rev. W. N., M.A
Fletcher, Mr. L.
Frazer, Mr. H.
Fry, Rev. H.
Gammon, Mr. G. E.
Geddes, Rev. J.
Gladding, Rev. T.
Goodman, Mr. A., F.C.A.
Grant, Mr. J. G.
Gregory, Mr. T. C.
Haine, Mrs.
Haines, Mr. F. C.
Harley, Mr. R.
Hearn, Miss M. F.
Hibbert, Mr. and Mrs. J. W.
Higman, Mr. F. S.
Howell, Rev. H. G.
Hughes, Ald. T. J.
Hughes, Mr. C.
Hughes, Rev. H. O.
Jenkins, Mr. R.
Jenkins, Rev. J. A., B.A.
Jenkins, Rev. W. S.
James, Rev. W.
Jones, Rev. J. D.
Kettle, Rev. J. W.
Keybury, Rev. R.
Lane, Rev. S. B.
Leman, Mr. J. S.
Lewis, Mr. A.
Lewis, Mr. D.
Lewis, Mr. E. J.
Lewis, Mr. W.
Lewis, Mr. W. J.
Llewellyn, Rev. J. B.
Lipscombe, Mr. G. P.
Maclean, Mr. and Mrs.
Marychurch, Mr. and Mrs. J. G.
Mason, Mrs. T.
Mills, Rev. A. F.
Morris, Rev. W. J.
Moul, Mrs. T. E.
Myers, Mr. R.
Newbury, Rev. R.
Norman, Mr. G.
Ninnes, Mrs.
Page, Mr. L.
Pike, Mr. G.
Phillips, Mr. J. F.
Phillips, Rev. D. P.
Poynton, Mr. T. H.
Pye, Mr. Thos.
Ramsdale, Miss, and Friend
Reese, Mr. E.
Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. E.
Roberts, Rev. J. C., D.D.
Robinson, Mr. S.
Rogers, Mr. R. H.
Rogers, Rev. J.
Rowland, Rev. E.
Rutter, Mrs. R. M.
Sanders, Alderman
Sanders, Mrs.

Sanders, Mr. and Mrs.
Sanders, Mr. and Mrs.
Saxon, Mr. J.
Scott, Mr. and Mrs. J.
Shepherd, Mrs. D.
Slocombe, Mr. J.
Smith, Mr. E.
Sparks, Mr. M. F.
Stranger, Mr. R. H.
Sutherland, Mr. R. W. J.
Talbot, Mr. J.
Tamsett, Mrs.
Thomas, Mr. A. P.
Thomas, Rev. E.
Thomas, Rev. T.
Thomas, Mrs. W.
Turner, Mr. G. W.
Whiteley, Mr. J.
Wild, Mr. J. B.
Williams, Mr. B.
Williams, Rev. B. D.
Williams, Rev. J. H.
Williams, Mr. T., J.P.
Williams, Mr. T.
Wilson, Mr. J.
Wilton, Mr. R.
Woodhead, Mr. E.
Woodcuff, Mr. F. B.

FREE CHURCH INFORMATION.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

THE controversy as to when the twentieth century began has utterly died out, and there seems to be practically a unanimous opinion that it commenced on the 1st of January, 1901. The disputants on both sides, however, are agreed that we are now in the twentieth century. The new year was ushered in by events of great interest and importance. In this volume naturally the Simultaneous Mission has the first place. But among the events for which the early days of this century will ever be remembered are the Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia and the death of Queen Victoria.

QUEEN VICTORIA.

The name of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, will ever be associated with the greatest era in the history of our country. There was something fitting in the circumstance that the Queen's reign should come to an end almost simultaneously with the nineteenth century. The Queen had sat on the throne of England longer than any of her predecessors, and she had also outlived by a few days the oldest of them—her own grandfather. She had, from the first day of her reign, a strong hold on the affections of her people, and that hold grew stronger the more they knew of each other. As Mr. Gladstone once said the great note of the civic and religious history of the Queen's reign was emancipation. To mention only one thing as an illustration. When she came to the throne Dissenters were excluded from the ancient universities, Church rates and other injustices were still prevalent. Now the portals of our ancient halls of learning have been thrown open to Free Churchmen, who have not been slow to enter therein and to possess themselves of the privileges and distinctions open to them. The Queen was faithful all her days to the principles of civic and religious liberty, to which she and her house owed their throne. None of her subjects were more loyal than the Nonconformists, a loyalty which was all the more valuable because it was absolutely unbought and unrewarded. The late Queen was very tolerant in her religious opinions. In England she was a member of the Episcopal Church of England and in Scotland of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Her relations with the distinguished ministers of the Church of Scotland seem to have been even more intimate than with the bishops and higher clergy of England. But the Queen had no prejudice against Free Churchmen and we believe that one of her intimate friends was a Congregational minister at Windsor. Happily the same spirit of tolerance has descended to her son who now sits upon her throne. It was King Edward, at that time Prince of Wales, who insisted that positions should be reserved for Nonconformists on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral at the Diamond Jubilee service. Many of the Nonconformist Churches and organisations have presented addresses to His Majesty, assuring him of their sympathy with him in his bereavement and their devotion to his throne and person. The King has received all these deputations most graciously with a dignity which was not a cover but an accompaniment of earnestness and sincerity.

THE DECLARATION ON THE MASS.

The Roman Catholics of this country and of other parts of the King's dominions have objected most strongly to some terms of the declaration on the Mass which by statute the King is obliged to make before Parliament. The words objected to are "blasphemous" and "idolatrous." Free Churchmen are determined to resist in the most uncompromising and determined manner any attempt to tamper with the Protestant succession. But it is felt that the language is unnecessarily offensive to millions of His Majesty's subjects, and that it would be well to revise the phraseology. A joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament has been appointed for the purpose. Free Churchmen would have been more disposed than they are to listen to the complaints of Roman Catholics if the Roman Church at the time of the Queen's death had assumed an attitude more in harmony with the spirit of the nation. It will be remembered that Cardinal Vaughan stated that no memorial services could be held in their churches for the Queen. And the Duke of Norfolk, who is the head of the Roman Catholic community in England, went out of his way in an address to the Pope to reprobate the activity of Protestant agencies in the City of Rome. The Pope, in his reply, denounced the toleration of Protestantism in Rome, and described the right of private judgment as a specious doctrine. The offence created by this statement was still fresh in the memory of Free Churchmen when the Catholics raised their loud complaint against the words of the declaration on the Mass. Alas! the Roman Catholic Church too often lays itself open to the taunt that the only toleration in which it believes is the toleration of Catholics when they are in a minority.

THE SIMULTANEOUS MISSION.

In March, 1900, the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, meeting at Sheffield, unanimously and enthusiastically adopted the proposal to hold a Simultaneous Mission early in 1901 in connection with all the Free Church Councils of the country. The credit of first suggesting this mission belongs to the Rev. Thomas Law, Organising Secretary of the National Council. For some time united Evangelistic Missions, conducted by Gipsy Smith and Mr. W. R. Lane, have had the first place in the work of the Council. The success of these enterprises suggested to Mr. Law a similar endeavour, but on a larger scale. His suggestion was submitted to the National Council, which responded with alacrity and fervent zeal. The readiness and hopefulness with which the local Councils took up the matter is a manifest token that the Hand of God was in the movement. From the time when the National Council adopted the suggestion until the actual mission commenced the local Councils and the National Council were fully occupied in making their preparations for this unprecedented and unparalleled campaign. Great masses of literature were sent out from the central office. Hundreds of missioners were allocated. The London mission lasted from January 26th to February 4, and had the most encouraging results. The work in the provinces, which lasted from February 16th to 26th, was even more fruitful. In all, it is estimated that fully 3,000 missions were held. It is impossible, even if it were desirable, to tabulate the results. Thousands were added to the Kingdom of God, and there were unmistakable indications that multitudes of Christian people had been roused from the sleep of apathy and indifference to passionate earnestness and evangelistic zeal. The promoters of this enterprise feel confident that only the first-fruits of the harvest have as yet been reaped, and that for a generation yet, at least, the effect of the mission will be manifest, not only in a higher and more earnest tone in the churches, but also in much moral, civic, and political awakening.

CHURCH UNION IN SCOTLAND.

Last autumn the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church became one under the title of the United Free Church of Scotland. This union is one of the most significant events in the religious history of the last century. The new communion has a membership of somewhere about half a million. This means a membership not much less than that of the Wesleyan Methodists or the Congregationalists in England. When one considers how very much more the population of England is than that of Scotland one realises how great is the comparative strength of the United Free Church. Practically the only obstacle to complete Presbyterian re-union in Scotland is the Established Church of Scotland. This Church is identical in doctrine and discipline with the United Free Church. The only difference is that it is linked with the State, and that, of course, forms an insuperable barrier to union.

The movement, which culminated last October in such glorious success, had a generation of history behind it. It is impossible to think of the United Free Church without thinking of Principal Rainy. The union is the glorious crown of long years of unremitting and disinterested toil. President Rainy was the first Moderator or President of the United Free Church. He is the first man in the United Free Church, and there is no second. Among Scots whose reputation is almost wholly confined to their native land, Principal Rainy is decidedly the first. He dominated the annual General Assembly of the Free Church in a manner without parallel, as not even Mr. Gladstone ever dominated the House of Commons. His genius as a master of assemblies is unrivalled, his power of divining the feelings of an excited tumultuous gathering, and of giving it expression amounts to a perfect instinct. Assumption and affectation are entirely absent from him. He is a great-hearted, high-minded, and noble-spirited Christian gentleman. He is never bitter, never discourteous to an opponent, though his speeches are sometimes marked with a gentle, excellent irony. He would have made a great fame as a diplomatist. As the Moderator of the United Free Church, Dr. Rainy rose to the greatness of the occasion, and he did so without effort. His mind dwells in the high places among the ample ether and the divine air.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

It is obvious enough that the present Government is not disposed to undertake anything heroic in the matter of temperance legislation. The late Home Secretary, Sir Matthew White Ridley, addressing a gathering of country brewers, assured them that they meant to proceed very cautiously in any legislation they might take as a result of the Report of Lord Peel's Commission. Lord Salisbury, too, has flouted the Report of the Commission, and has repudiated with scorn the idea that the Government is bound to take any action on a Report of one of its own Commissions. But, despite these unpleasant symptoms, the cause of temperance has during the year made considerable progress.

In the first place, one has to chronicle the Conference at Manchester, attended by representatives of all the temperance organisations in the country, which unanimously agreed to concentrate its endeavour upon the adoption of Lord Peel's Minority Report. Among those who addressed this Conference was Dr. Townsend, President-Elect of the National Free Church Council. Local optionists, while not surrendering one plank of their distinctive programme, have resolved to unite for the purpose of obtaining all they can at the present time. It is recognised that there are many recommendations in Lord Peel's Report which, if carried out, will effect nothing short of a revolution in the liquor trade of this country. One most important recommendation aims at the reduction of licences. It is proposed that in towns there should not be more than one licence to every 700 of the population, and in country districts not more than one to every 400. Lord Peel's proposal is that within seven years the number of licences in the country should be reduced to this proportion. That would mean a reduction of 60,000 licences for the sale of drink. Who can estimate the great good that would follow such a drastic reform?

In the meantime there are some instalments of this great programme which should be obtained almost at once. As we write the Bill for prohibiting the sale of liquor to children under sixteen years of age has passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a practically unanimous vote. The second reading was proposed by an ardent Radical, Mr. Crombie, the member for Kincardineshire, and seconded by as ardent a Conservative—namely, Sir William Houldsworth, the member for North-West Manchester. Sir William Houldsworth has never abandoned the hope of obtaining a substantial measure of temperance reform, even from the present Government. It is due to him more than to any other man perhaps that this question has been saved from becoming a matter of party dispute. The fate of the Bill in the House of Commons for the present depends upon the Government. Mr. Jesse Collings has stated that the Government will leave the matter entirely in the hands of the House. But unless exceptional facilities are granted for pushing forward the Bill it will be lost for this Session. Even if it is passed it will encounter bitter opposition in the Lords, who last year threw out this same Bill. The Upper Chamber, too, was responsible last year for the throwing out of Mr. Albert Spicer's Bill for the extension of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act to Monmouthshire. The Government's own programme for temperance reform this Session includes a Bill for dealing with the supply of drink to intoxicated persons. Most temperance reformers are much more anxious to prevent people becoming intoxicated.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

On January 1st, 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia came into existence. It was the occasion of great rejoicing throughout the whole of the Australian continent, and the future of the newly organised community is looked forward to with keen interest and ardent hope. Mr. Barton, who was one of the delegates sent over to this country to promote the passage of this Bill through the Imperial Parliament, and who became widely known to the public of this country by his resolute insistence on the Bill as it had been accepted by the Australian people, was selected first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia. Lord Hopetoun, who had such a distinguished career as Governor of Victoria, was selected as the first

Governor-General of the new Commonwealth. It was one of the desires of the late Queen that the Duke and Duchess of York should represent her at the opening of the Parliament of the Commonwealth. It was feared that the death of Her Majesty would interfere with this project, but King Edward resolved to respect the wish of his venerable mother and determined that the visit should not be abandoned. The Duke and Duchess of York had a very cordial leavetaking when they embarked on board the *Ophir*, and their reception in Australia will undoubtedly be of the heartiest. The King desires to show by sending his son and his son's wife to the opening ceremony of the new Parliament, how keen is his interest in the welfare of his subjects of the great Australian Continent. The Duke and Duchess of York will also include in their tour, visits to other parts of the dominions over which some day—may it be a distant day—they will come to rule.

THE WAR.

There is little to be said about this. During the year it has dragged on its weary length until men of all parties and shades of opinion are tired of it. On March 13th last year, Lord Roberts entered Bloemfontein, on the 31st of May, Johannesburg was in our possession and a few days later the British flag was flying over the Government House at Pretoria. It was expected by many that the war would then immediately collapse, but guerilla tactics have been maintained uninterruptedly since that time and the end seems yet to be far off. It will be a long time certainly before the havoc and loss caused by the war will be repaired. An attempt to negotiate terms of peace between Lord Kitchener and Commandant-General Botha failed. The Boers have a special objection to Sir Alfred Milner as Governor of the new territory.

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR WORLD'S CONVENTION.

The Christian Endeavour World's Convention held its meetings in London from July 13th to 20th. The daily attendance was estimated at from 30,000 to 60,000. This made the convention the largest religious gathering that has ever been held. There are now 60,000 Christian Endeavour societies, with a membership of more than 3,500,000. About 2,000 of the delegates came from America. An immense encampment was erected in the Alexandra Park, which provided accommodation for more than 3,000 delegates. There were also tents for meetings. The largest had accommodation for about 9,000 persons. The "welcome" meetings held at the Albert Hall and Alexandra Park were most successful. One of the leading officials at the Albert Hall said there were 10,000 persons present, whilst at the Alexandra Palace, the Great Central Hall, chaired for 10,000, was packed. Canadians, Australians, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, and a host of provincial Britons gathered in the grounds. At the Albert Hall the Rev. F. W. Bourne, as representing the Metropolitan Free Church Federation, and at the Alexandra Palace Dr. Monro Gibson, as representing the National Free Church Council, offered the delegates a welcome to London and England.

The Albert Hall meeting was presided over by the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A. Dr. F. E. Clark, the founder of the movement, had a magnificent reception. Dr. Clark has visited Christian Endeavour societies in Japan and China, and got out of Peking just before the situation in the city became dangerous. At the Alexandra Palace the chairman was the Rev. J. D. Lamont, the Chairman of the British Council, and one of the most popular Wesleyan ministers in Ireland. Speeches were delivered by representatives from Canada, America, Spain, France, Germany, and China. On Convention Sunday over 200 Nonconformist churches in London had special services in connection with the movement. At the Alexandra Park the speakers included the Rev. Theo. Parr (New South Wales), Lord Kinnaird, the Rev. Alexander Ramsay (London), Miss Jennie Street, and others. The Rev. C. M. Sheldon, the author of "In His Steps," was perhaps the most drawing name on the programme. Dr. John Watson, of Liverpool, was among the speakers, too, and Dr. Clifford, who was received with great enthusiasm, and who discussed "Social Problems."

THE FREE CHURCH FEDERATION MOVEMENT.

The movement which has in seven years covered the whole of England and Wales, and made its influence felt in America, Australia, Cape Colony, and elsewhere, had its beginning, humanly speaking, in an article contributed by Dr. Guinness Rogers, to the *Methodist Times* of February 20th, 1890. The idea of the article, which was written at the request of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., was a Church Congress on a Nonconformist basis. The *Methodist Times* called attention to Dr. Rogers' contribution in a leading article, in which it contrasted the force and influence, altogether out of proportion to numbers, wielded by Roman Catholicism in the country, with the comparative weakness of Nonconformity. The reason, said the *Methodist Times*, was obvious: "Catholicism is an army, Protestantism is a mob." The next number of the journal contained letters from Revs. Dr. Clifford, F. B. Meyer, B.A. (who was then minister of Regent's Park Baptist Chapel), Dr. Stephenson, Dr. Townsend, Dr. Keen (ex-President of the Bible Christian Conference), and Dr. Watts (Book-Steward of the Methodist New Connexion), approving such a Congress as Dr. Rogers had suggested, "for purely consultative and fraternal intercourse."

Two years and nine months nearly elapsed between the publication of Dr. Rogers' article in the *Methodist Times* and the meeting of the first Congress in Manchester. But the spirit of Federation was active all this time. Ministers' fraternals were growing in number and influence, and some Nonconformist Councils (associations of ministers and Churches without any representative basis, at that time) had come into existence. Union was in the air. The silent preparation which made the first Free Church Congress, held at Manchester, in November, 1892, a success, had been continuous and thorough. The organising arrangements began in a private conference of representative Free Church leaders held at the house of Mr. Percy W. Bunting, M.A., who has from that hour until now given the movement unstinted support. The object of the Congress, in the opinion of the Conference at Mr. Bunting's house, should be "to consider in what way the union of the Churches for Christian work could be effected." Dr. Mackennal was Honorary Secretary of the Committee, composed of Manchester ministers and laymen, which arranged for the first Free Church Congress to be held in that city. Dr. Mackennal's name is indissolubly associated with the Free Church Federation Movement.

The Congress held its first meeting on Monday, November 7th, 1892. There was an interchange of pulpits in the city on the previous Sunday. The Congress had a different chairman at each session, and there was no President. Mr. Henry Lee, J.P., a prominent Congregationalist of the city, presided at the inaugural meeting. The first day was devoted to conference on the idea of "the Church, the Ministry, the Sacraments, and the Fellowship." "It was at once perceived," Dr. Mackennal has written, "that the same idea of the Church was held by Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists; the differences were of method, or of interpretation, not of the substance of the faith." Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., presided at a public demonstration on the evening of the first day. The attendance was good, and the enthusiasm strong. The meeting warmly applauded all appeals for unity. Dr. Monro Gibson, Dr. Berry, and Dr. Clifford were the speakers. Dr. Berry asked, amid loud applause, "Has not the time come for the federation of our barred Churches into one grand Free Church?"

Even at this early period in the history of the movement the necessity for united work in the evangelising of England was recognised. At the first sitting of the Congress one of the speakers said that the "evangelising of the great cities imperatively demanded the united action of the Churches." On the second day Mr. Percy W. Bunting spoke on "Town Problems," and the Rev. Thomas Law on "Nonconformist Parishes." Mr. Bunting recommended for the purpose of evangelistic social work by the Churches, the division of towns into districts, worked unitedly, the Nonconformist Council of the town taking supervision of the whole. Mr. Law had been the originator and the moving spirit of an organisation representing the Free Churches of Bradford, by means of which a house-to-house visitation of the town had been made. To work the scheme Bradford was divided into a large number of sections, and to each Church was apportioned a section. Then the question arose, "Why should this idea of each Church being responsible for a section, or district, or 'parish'—why should it not become rooted and permanent?" Hence arose the Free Church Parochial System, which has been followed, wherever adopted, by great blessing to the Churches and their parishes. Mr. Law was thus able to report that what Mr. Bunting recommended had been done, in Bradford, with distinguished success.

Between November, 1892, and March, 1894, when the second Congress was held at Leeds, a good deal of quiet, steady work in the direction of union was done. Free Church Councils were formed in various parts of the country. The Rev. Thomas Law went from town to town expounding and commending the house to house visitation and parochial scheme. Belgrave Chapel was the place of meeting in Leeds. Like the Manchester Congress, the one at Leeds consisted for the most part of personal members, though there were some representatives from denominational associations and Free Church Councils, which were beginning to be formed. The great constitutional question which was discussed at Leeds was, whether the basis of representation in future Congresses should be denominational or territorial. Many prominent leaders spoke on behalf of denominational representation. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes offered a resolute opposition to this, and carried his point. His convincing argument was that the territorial basis—in short, the representation of Councils and Federations—would avoid sectarian distinction and also evade the possibility of compromising or committing separate Churches to any particular policy. It would also mean that representatives would attend the Congress, not as Baptists, or Methodists, or Presbyterians, or Congregationalists, but simply as Evangelical Free Churchmen—a fact which in itself was a proclamation to the world that the Free Churches were in essence one. The introduction of the representative element, which was first predominant at the Birmingham Congress, turned a "fortuitous concourse of atoms" into a real Nonconformist Parliament to defend our imperilled interests in town and country, to make the Nonconformist conscience articulate, and to promote the evangelisation of England.

The Leeds Congress determined that for the future each Congress should have an official President. The Committee asked the Rev. Thomas Law, who, at the Manchester Congress, had first introduced the question of a Free Church Parochial System, and the Rev. J. M. Gwynne Owen, who had initiated the Hants Federation, to become joint Secretaries for organising Councils throughout the country, Mr. Law to work in the towns, and Mr. Owen in the rural districts. The result of their efforts was that when the third Congress met at Birmingham, in March, 1895, no fewer than 130 Councils were reported, most of which had come into existence during the year.

During these great Birmingham meetings Mr. George Cadbury made a communication to Dr. Townsend and Mr. James Rutherford, the local Secretaries, concerning the financial necessities of the movement. This was followed by an interview between Mr. Cadbury on the one side and Mr. Price Hughes, Dr. Townsend, and Mr. Rutherford on the other. Mr. Cadbury and his brother, the late Mr. Richard Cadbury, each placed a considerable sum of money at the disposal of the Committee, for the purpose of covering the entire country with Evangelical Free Church Councils. To Mr. George Cadbury the organisation owes more than can ever be told. He has from the first strongly and constantly urged that the main work should be spiritual, and he is a great believer in the Free Church Parochial System.

Dr. Berry was the first President of the Congress, and in the inevitable circumstances of the time he had been appointed by the Committee. His successor, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., was at the close of the meetings welcomed by Dr. Berry as "the first President duly and formally elected by the Congress." Dr. Berry's Presidential address at Birmingham at once raised the movement to the high spiritual level along which it has ever since continued to move. Discussing the origin of the movement he remarked: "There is only one answer which seems to me to cover the facts or to satisfy an intelligent judgment. It is to be found in the present-day inspiration of the Holy Ghost, acting in and through the Churches of Jesus Christ."

At Birmingham the Rev. Thomas Law submitted his first Organising Report. At the time of the Leeds Congress, in 1894, not more than a dozen Councils were in existence—there were now 130. Something like three-fourths of them had undertaken house-to-house visitation. The idea, said Mr. Law, originated in Halifax, with the Rev. J. R. Bailey, now of Eccles. Bradford practically led the way; Birmingham, Leeds, and other towns followed. Further, united missions had also been conducted, under the auspices of the Councils. United crusades had been organised against gambling, impurity, and drunkenness. The Councils had also done what is best designated Civic Work. They had materially influenced local elections: Boards of Guardians, School Boards, Town Councils, County Councils. In some cases they had nominated candidates and carried them. A woful amount of ignorance existed in many districts in reference to Nonconformist history and principles, and Mr. Law was able to report to the Birmingham Congress that the Councils had set to work to disseminate literature, and had organised lectures. The Romanising tendencies and tactics of the Anglican Church had been exposed in many quarters, misappropriation of charities had been stopped, and the Free Churches had asserted their right to some share of the religious work in workhouses and infirmaries. One Council had provided funds to enable a good lecturer to spend twelve months in addressing village audiences on Free Church principles, and especially educating the people in the rural districts up to a true realisation of the privileges in their possession to-day.

The Birmingham Congress was universally acknowledged to have been a magnificent success. The Rev. Thomas Law was invited to become Honorary Organising Secretary, and at the Nottingham Congress, in 1896, he was persuaded to devote the whole of his time to the movement. During his year of office as Honorary Organising Secretary, Mr. Law had his offices in Birmingham, and was ably helped by Mr. J. Rutherford, who was appointed Assistant Organising Secretary. After the 1896 Congress, Mr. Law came to London, where the headquarters of the movement were now established—at the Memorial Hall. Mr. Law had been a minister of the Methodist Free Churches for twenty-three years when, for the sake of the Federation movement, he resigned the pastorate of a most important suburban church in Birmingham.

The Nottingham Congress in 1896 was not less successful than its predecessors. The number of Councils had grown from 130 to 209, to be found in all parts of the country. It was a happy circumstance that the Mayor for the year (Alderman J. A. Bright), and many members of the Corporation, were Nonconformists. The Mayor gave a reception to the representatives from the Councils, together with their hosts and hostesses and distinguished citizens of Nottingham, in the historic Nottingham Castle. At this Council Dr. Nicoll suggested the issue of a Free Church Catechism and the starting of a penny weekly *Spectator* on Nonconformist lines. In the meanwhile, the Catechism has become an accomplished fact.

Five other annual meetings have since taken place, in London, Bristol, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Cardiff. Progress has been continuous and almost by leaps and bounds. Dr. Monro Gibson, who is now our most genial Honorary Secretary, presided over the London gatherings at the City Temple. 384 Councils had now been formed, an increase of 175 during the year. Broadmead Baptist Chapel, Bristol (once the scene of the ministry of Robert Hall), was the meeting place of the 1898 annual Council. Dr. Clifford was the President for the year. Mr. Law reported 500 Councils. That is to say—in three short years the number of Councils had risen from 130 to 500! On the 1st of December in this same year, there was a unique Free Church demonstration in the City Temple, London, described by Mr. Price Hughes as "the most magnificent meeting held in Europe during the last three centuries." Side by side on the platform sat the official chiefs of all the Free Churches. They represented 1,841,767 church members, 7,000,000 adherents, 3,170,193 Sunday-school children, and £50,000,000 in property.

The National Council visited Liverpool in 1899, and Dr. Mackennal (who up to this time had acted as Honorary Secretary) was President. In his address from the chair he referred in particular to that part of the Organising Secretary's Report which dealt with united missions, and spoke of the entrancing interest of some of the details. The death of Dr. Berry, which occurred on January 31st, cast a shadow over the Liverpool proceedings. Dr. Monro Gibson and the Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., spoke with deep tenderness to a hushed audience on the loss which had been sustained by the departure of Dr. Berry from the midst of his brethren. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool for 1899 (Mr. William Oulton, J.P.) was a Wesleyan Methodist, and gave the representatives a welcome at the Town Hall. The Cromwell Demonstration at the City Temple on April 25th, which attracted the attention of the whole country, was organised by the National Council. The meetings were acknowledged to have been the most enthusiastic gatherings ever held, even in the Cathedral of Nonconformity. At the instigation of the National Council a demonstration was also held in the Market Place of Huntingdon, the town in which the great Protector was born. Local Councils all over the country held public meetings in connection with the tercentenary.

The Rev. C. H. Kelly presided over the annual meetings at Sheffield in 1900. The enthusiastic adoption of the General Organising Secretary's project, for a united Simultaneous Mission all over England and Wales early in 1901, made the Sheffield gatherings epoch-making. Next in importance to this achievement should, perhaps, be ranked the unanimous decision of the Council that the Committee should forthwith set about establishing a Free Church Girls' Guild. Mr. Kelly, as President, abundantly fulfilled the expectations that were formed of him. His address on "Retrospect and Prospect" was a manly, straightforward, invigorating utterance. The Sheffield Council recommended Lord Peel's report to the favourable consideration of the local Councils throughout the country. The nomination of the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., as President, was accepted with acclamation.

The meetings at Cardiff, in March of this year, coming as they did after the Simultaneous Mission, were undoubtedly the most successful that have been held since the movement began. The sessions took place in the handsome and spacious Park Hall, the largest place of meeting in South Wales, and over 1,000 representatives were present from all parts of the country. Mr. Greenhough's Presidential address was on "The Unifying Forces of the Times." He spoke for nearly an hour without manuscript or single scrap of note, and without, for a moment, losing the eager, delighted attention of the crowded assembly. Dr. Parker preached the annual Council sermon to a congregation which thronged the hall. Thousands were turned away. Those of them who could not find admission sought compensation at the Andrews Hall, where the Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., was preaching. The Rev. Thomas Law, the Organising Secretary, reported that 87 new Councils had been formed during the year, and that the number of Councils was now about 700. All the programme was interesting, but to many the most memorable session of the Council was that on Wednesday afternoon, when the question "Is our Preaching as effective as it ought to be?" was discussed by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., and Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A. "Simultaneous Mission Reports and Experiences" were discussed by Rev. John McNeill, Dr. Rendel Harris, and Gipsy Smith. The Simultaneous Mission was in the hearts of all the representatives and put them all in high hope and courage. The nomination of Dr. Townsend, as President for 1902-1903, was unanimously adopted. The meetings next year are to be held at Bradford.

We have already made a brief reference, in a summary of the Report presented by Mr. Law to the Birmingham Congress in 1895, to the practical work done by the Councils. We indicated there the main lines on which local activity proceeded. Much of this activity has been under the direct suggestion and inspiration of the National Council, which has never ceased to urge the importance of a continuous and unrelenting battle against drink, gambling, and impurity. It would take too much space to enumerate the items of special work, but a few may be given. For full information, the Organising Report which is published yearly should be studied. One Council has instituted a quarterly visitation of Sunday-schools; another, a special Sunday-school and religious service on undenominational lines; another, a united P.S.A. society, whose meetings are crowded and which is in all respects a great success. An employment bureau; a Free Church Help Society to work a benevolent fund in relief of special cases of poverty and sickness which may be found in connection with the visitation; a Lay Preachers' Union; a Home for Friendless Girls, a Boys' Brigade—these are some of the schemes which are worked by the local Councils.

The chief work of the National Council is spiritual—the deepening of the religious life in the Churches and the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. With this end in view, the well-known evangelists, Gipsy Smith and Mr. W. R. Lane, have been engaged to give all their time to united evangelistic missions in connection with the Free Church Councils. In the summer the Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, the well-known Primitive Methodist, will also become one of the National Council's missioners.

The Publication Department is a growing branch of the National Council's work. The Free Church Catechism is the most important publication which it has yet issued. The day on which it was published, January 5th, 1899, has become a great event in history. It is now in its nineteenth edition, and there is a good, steady demand for it still. A special committee has translated it into Welsh; Italian and French versions have also appeared. A version in the Bobangi language, Upper Congo, is being prepared at the present moment. The Free Church Handbook, edited by Mr. Howard Evans, first made its appearance in 1898. It went into three editions. The 1899 edition was enlarged and improved, and also sold well. THE FREE CHURCH YEAR BOOK, now in its second year, takes the place of the Handbook. The Handbook statistics attracted great attention, showing conclusively, as they did, that the Free Churches were fully as strong as the Established Church. The two magazines issued by the National Council, the *Free Church Chronicle* and the *Free Churchman*, call for a word of notice. The former, which is issued monthly at 2d., is the official organ of the movement. It aims at being a bright, interesting record of the Federation movement, and at the same time prints each month a large quantity of reading matter which will be found of general interest to Nonconformists. The *Free Churchman* is enjoying a very gratifying success as a localised magazine. The Circulating Library was founded in 1897, through the generosity of Mr. George Cadbury and others. It consists of seventy-five boxes (twenty-five of which were presented by Mr. W. P. Hartley). Each box contains between fifty and sixty of the best books of theology, biography, fiction and travel. The boxes are sent to the various local Councils free of charge for the use of the members of the Council.

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President	
Treasurer	
Secretary	**Rev. E. Nicholas**

FREE CHURCH STATISTICS.

(Compiled by Mr. Howard Evans.)

ENGLAND AND WALES.

It is absolutely necessary that anyone who makes use of the figures given in this Section of the Year Book, shall, before doing so, read the following explanations and cautions, otherwise mistakes are sure to occur. The figures are taken from the Year Books and Reports of the organised Evangelical Free Churches, and in the few instances where the statistics were not complete the necessary information has been obtained from responsible officials. In the case of the Baptists and Congregationalists, the figures are those published in their Year Book published on 1st January, 1901; the other Year Books were published in the previous autumn. All the tables fail to represent the full strength of the Free Churches. For example the Salvation Army only appears in the return of sitting accommodation, while the Society of Friends and the Moravians do not appear in that return. The "Brethren," of whom there are three or four sections, publish no statistics at all. No account is taken of the Undenominational Missions, some of which operate on a very large scale, in London and the great towns, nor of the work of those City Missionaries who labour under the superintendence of Nonconformist ministers, nor of institutions like the Stockport Sunday School Society, where members of different denominations in large numbers work side by side, nor of the isolated congregations of Protestant churchmen who have been driven into unwilling Nonconformity by the extreme Ritualism of local clergymen. It should be borne in mind also that there are other bodies outside the Established Church which are not ranked as Evangelical—the Unitarians with about 320 congregations and 270 Sunday Schools; the New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborgian) with 75 congregations and 6,500 members; the Jews with 80 synagogues and estimated population of 120,000; and the Roman Catholics with an estimated population of one and a-half millions, and 1,500 churches, chapels, and stations.

The statistics given under the heading of Church Accommodation are more complete than in any previous year, and approach more closely to accuracy. The "Churches of Christ" and the Reformed

Episcopal Church appear for the first time in the list. The Calvinistic Methodists have made more complete inquiry into their church accommodation and find that they are in a more favourable position than they had supposed. On the other hand three or four denominations have made no new returns, such small additions as are to be found being only those within the actual cognizance of the official furnishing the information. It would hardly be correct to say that the Evangelical Free Churches have increased their sitting accommodation by over 100,000, as a careless comparison of the figures would seem to indicate; but it is safe to say that the Evangelical Free Churches now provide 8,100,652 sittings, without reckoning the unclassified. It may also be affirmed confidently that the Free Churches are providing new sittings more rapidly than the Established Church. The increase in sittings of all kinds provided by the latter in the year is 30,222; the increase in the Wesleyan sittings alone is 22,334. Baptists will probably note that there is an apparent falling off in the number of sittings provided by them. The explanation is that in the Baptist Handbook for 1900, there was a clerical error in certain county returns which has now been rectified, and the apparent decrease is simply the result of the rectification of that mistake.

It should also be borne in mind that there are chapels not associated with the Baptist Union which send in no returns, and are consequently unaccounted for in statistics here given; these are more than a set-off against those "Union Churches" which appear in both the Congregational and Baptist Year Books. In regard to the Congregationalists some explanation is necessary. The Congregational Churches only began to collect systematic returns three years ago. As might have been expected, so many Churches at first failed to fill up the schedules that it was necessary to add 10 per cent. to the official figures in 1899, and 8 per cent. in 1900. The number of Churches failing to send returns has now fallen to 2 per cent., and it is no longer desirable to continue to make any addition to the official figures. In making comparisons, however, between the Congregational figures in the present Year Book with those of the previous year this fact should be borne in mind.

The question has been asked by some critical observers of these figures why no distinction is drawn between permanent church structures and other buildings in which services are held. It is a sufficient answer to say that the Year Books do not furnish the necessary information, and that so long as people are brought within reach of the Gospel message, it matters little in what kind of building they are collected.

The communicant figures are not satisfactory, even when allowance is made for the apparent Congregational decrease which has already been explained. It is true that the apparent net loss of 1,622 is thus more than accounted for; but nearly all the denominations appear to be almost stationary. Even the substantial Baptist increase is largely accounted for by the accidental incompleteness of last year's returns.

The tables of Sunday school teachers and scholars should not be compared in a lump with those of last year, mainly because of the different way in which the Congregational figures are now treated. For fuller information as to Sunday schools the reader is referred to the paper on that subject read at the Cardiff Congress.

It would be advantageous if those denominations which do not collect annual returns of sitting accommodation would do so at fixed periods, any increase being reported *ad interim* to the chapel secretary. The Wesleyans have such a return every ten years, but the chapel secretary is always able to report the increase from year to year on application.

SITTINGS.

Baptists	1,273,325
Congregationalists	1,643,400
Presbyterians	164,491
Wesleyans	2,224,057
Primitive Methodists	962,720
Calvinistic Methodists	451,200
Salvation Army	540,000
United Methodist Free Churches	426,500
Methodist New Connexion	137,478
Bible Christians	153,600
Wesleyan Reform Union	43,834
Independent Methodists	33,000
Churches of Christ	20,000
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	13,347
Reformed Episcopal Church	7,200
Free Church of England	6,500
Total	8,100,652

The Society of Friends and the Moravians have no returns of sittings. In 1851, according to the census, the former body provided 91,599 sittings, and the latter 9,305.

Communicants.

Baptists	346,083
Congregationalists	398,741
Presbyterians	74,541
Wesleyans	552,938
Primitive Methodists	185,075
Calvinistic Methodists	156,058
United Methodist Free Churches	78,692
Methodist New Connexion	35,962
Bible Christians	29,150
Society of Friends	16,611
Churches of Christ	11,939
Independent Methodists	8,599
Wesleyan Reform Union	7,192
Moravians	3,371
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	2,355
Free Church of England	1,500
Reformed Episcopal Church	1,500
Total	1,910,302

Sunday-School Teachers.

Baptists	50,185
Congregationalists	61,988
Presbyterians	7,595
Wesleyans	130,161
Primitive Methodists	57,369
Calvinistic Methodists	25,377
United Methodist Free Churches	23,834
Methodist New Connexion	10,778
Bible Christians	7,371
Independent Methodists	2,841
Wesleyan Reform Union	2,684
Churches of Christ	1,462
Society of Friends	1,394
Moravians	575
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	452
Free Churches of England	310
Reformed Episcopal Church	256
	384,632

SUNDAY-SCHOOL SCHOLARS.

Baptists	513,709
Congregationalists	661,772
Presbyterians	82,488
Wesleyans	958,129
Primitive Methodists	435,706
Calvinistic Methodists	200,079
United Methodist Free Churches	186,238
Methodist New Connexion	82,465
Bible Christians	43,121
Society of Friends	45,755
Independent Methodists	26,205
Wesleyan Reform Union	23,015
Churches of Christ	13,339
Moravians	4,545
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	3,936
Free Church of England	3,526
Reformed Episcopal Church	2,580
	3,283,608

MINISTERS AT WORK.

Baptists	1,855
Congregationalists	2,509
Presbyterians	836
Wesleyans	1,858
Primitive Methodists	1,060
Calvinistic Methodists	626
United Methodist Free Churches	355
Methodist New Connexion	193
Bible Christians	169
Moravians	51
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	29
Free Church of England	27
Reformed Episcopal Church	28
Wesleyan Reform Union	18
	9,114

LOCAL PREACHERS.

Baptists	5,074
Congregationalists	5,050
Wesleyans	17,834
Primitive Methodists	15,730
Calvinistic Methodists	409
United Methodist Free Churches	3,028
Methodist New Connexion	1,029
Bible Christians	1,473
Independent Methodists	397
Wesleyan Reform Union	495
Churches of Christ	400
	50,919

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

CHURCH ACCOMMODATION.

	Sittings.
Free Churches (including accommodation of all kinds, except cottage meetings, where Sunday services are regularly held)	8,100,652
Anglican Church (including Churches, Chapels of Ease, Mission Rooms, &c., and other buildings)	6,979,150

COMMUNICANTS.

Free Churches	1,910,302
Established Church (*Estimated*)	1,941,760

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Free Churches	384,632
Established Church	207,539

SUNDAY-SCHOOL SCHOLARS.

Free Churches	3,283,608
Established Church	2,865,291

The great increase in the latter figure is due to the fact that Canon Burnside, editor of the "Church of England Year Book," recently explained that the numbers of those attending Bible-classes were in addition to the other Sunday scholars.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

PROGRESS OF UNSECTARIAN SCHOOLS.

INSTEAD of the official classification, "Voluntary" and "Board" schools, we prefer that of sectarian and unsectarian. Anglican and Roman Catholic schools are distinctly sectarian, but British and Wesleyan schools are practically as uncertain as Board schools. The figures of average attendance for the last four years are as follows :—

	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.
Sectarian ...	2,107,158	2,112,557	2,125,152	2,143,862
Unsectarian...	2,315,753	2,375,986	2,429,013	2,493,076

The children now under unsectarian instruction are in a majority of 349,091; yet the students in sectarian training colleges number about 2,700, while those in unsectarian colleges are only a little over 1,000.

The latest reports of the Education Department for the year 1899-00 shows that the following grants were made to Elementary schools in connection with the Established Church :—

Annual Grant	£1,941,277
Fee Grant	938,199
Aid Grant	464,853
	£3,344,329

The so-called "Voluntary" contributions amounted to £603,241, but a large part of this amount is contributed simply to avoid the imposition of a school rate, and about £100,000 consists of old endowments, which are certainly not the voluntary contributions of people now living.

INTERNATIONAL FIGURES.

(Not to be used for comparative purposes).

THE striking figures given below should not be compared with those of last year, inasmuch as the Baptist and Presbyterian returns are identically the same, their international figures only being collected every four years. Testimony was incidentally borne to the overwhelming preponderance of the Evangelical churches, outside the pale of Anglicanism, in the English-speaking world, at the Church Congress of 1899, by Mr. Eugene Stock, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society. He stated that, of 14,000 missionaries in heathen lands, supported by English-speaking Protestants, only one-fifth were sent out by the Episcopal churches; and that of 3,375,000 converts, under the care of the whole number of missionaries, only one-seventh were those of Episcopal missionaries. As Episcopalians are by no means lacking either in material wealth or missionary zeal, it is obvious that this result is due to their comparatively small numbers.

METHODISTS.

General view of Wesleyan Methodism at the death of John Wesley.—313 preachers, 119 circuits and mission stations, and 76,968 members. In the United States 97 circuits, 198 preachers, and 43,265 members.

In 1837 the membership in Great Britain and Ireland was 318,716; in foreign mission stations, 66,007; in Upper Canada, 14,000; while the American Conferences had charge of 650,678 members. Total for the world, 1,049,401, with 4,478 ministers.

Denomination.	Ministers.	Lay Preachers.	Church Membs. and Probatrs.	Officers and Teachers.	Sunday Scholars.
WESLEYAN METHODISTS—					
Great Britain	2,202	19,956	481,061	131,052	967,046
Ireland	255	598	28,276	2,766	25,270
Foreign Missions	379	2,000	60,680	3,293	65,881
French Conference	37	101	1,730	296	2,632
South African Conference	207	3,522	84,082	2,566	36,008
West Indian Conferences	94	891	47,309	3,224	28,175
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION	208	1,222	41,043	10,903	83,578
INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCHES	397	—	8,303	2,841	26,205
WESLEYAN REFORM UNION	18	496	7,187	2,690	20,025
BIBLE CHRISTIANS	291	1,858	34,883	9,082	57,939
PRIMITIVE METHODISTS	1,085	16,459	196,408	60,028	460,632
UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES	436	3,379	91,717	24,661	195,429
AUSTRALASIA—					
Methodist Church*	775	8,783	118,984	21,618	214,734
UNITED STATES—					
Methodist Episcopal	17,633	14,319	2,874,037	346,364	2,659,205
Union American Meth. Episcopal	200	—	15,000	—	—
African Methodist Episcopal	5,047	15,885	632,869	—	—
African Union Meth. Protestant	80	750	7,000	900	2,770
African Meth. Episcopal Zion	2,786	2,009	519,681	13,145	108,820
Methodist Protestant	1,505	409	183,585	16,235	105,314
Wesleyan Methodist	600	—	16,500	—	18,344
Methodist Episcopal (South)	5,923	6,724	1,456,272	99,338	811,579
Congregational Methodist	260	—	13,000	—	—
Congregational Meth. (coloured)	5	—	319	—	—
New Congregational Methodist	192	—	4,000	—	—
Zion Union Apostolic	30	—	2,346	—	—
Coloured Methodist Episcopal	1,985	2,786	198,628	7,098	79,876
Primitive Methodist	74	138	6,378	—	11,754
Free Methodist	938	805	28,134	—	32,552
Independent Methodist	8	—	2,569	—	—
Evangelist Missionary	48	27	2,010	—	1,200
CANADA—					
Methodist Church	2,032	3,464	284,901	33,023	267,654
Totals	45,731	106,481	7,358,892	791,123	6,282,622

BAPTISTS.

British Empire.	Pastors and Missionaries.	Members.	Sunday Scholars.	Baptisms.
Great Britain, Ireland, and Channel Islands	1,951	355,218	525,533	16,805
Dominion of Canada	642	97,142	65,163	3,747
India and Ceylon	623	110,114	42,305	6,745
Australasia	169	19,261	29,983	1,252
Other Colonies	103	43,196	30,829	1,820
Foreign Countries	35,233	4,511,254	1,720,428	207,345
	38,721	5,136,215	2,414,241	137,714

PRESBYTERIANS.

	Ministers.	Members.	S. S. Teachers.	S. Scholars.
United Kingdom	5,186	1,474,255	94,946	1,052,977
Europe	5,467	926,184	11,596	366,051
Asia	255	50,726	250	14,867
Africa	260	185,566	3,264	45,474
N. America	14,522	2,110,431	214,510	1,866,161
S. America	61	12,986	208	3,037
West I. Islands	30	11,133	905	1,571
Australia	460	42,965	6,906	69,993
New Zealand	201	25,338	3,118	33,633
Milanesia	25	3,050	—	—
	26,467	4,842,534	335,703	3,473,764

CONGREGATIONALISTS.

	Members.	S.S. Tchrs.	S.S. Schrs.
England and Wales	399,113	62,071	662,259
Scotland	30,170	2,566	27,690
Ireland	2,234	258	3,398
United States (no new returns)	628,234	—	746,904
Guiana	4,687	381	4,730
Jamaica	3,017	225	1,676
Canada	9,060	881	8,281
New Zealand	1,844	285	2,503
Australia	10,973	2,198	24,188
South Africa	10,993	—	7,269
Foreign Missions	50,730	489	42,259
	1,151,055		1,531,157

COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS.

EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES.

	Communicants.	S.S. Tchrs.	S.S. Schrs.
Methodists	7,358,892	791,133	6,282,622
Baptists	5,028,751	—	2,332,743
Presbyterians	3,903,464	323,899	3,104,880
Congregationalists ...	1,151,055	—	1,531,157
	*17,442,162		13,251,402

ANGLICAN CHURCH.

(*From the Church of England Year Book* 1900.)

	Communicants.	S.S. Tchrs.	S.S. Schrs.
England and Wales (estimated)	1,941,760	207,539	2,865,291
Ireland (estimated)	150,207	—	—
Scotland	46,440	—	18,420
United States	693,342	47,151	441,777
India, Colonies, and Missions...	503,685	—	—
	3,335,434		

Several reports from missionary dioceses are repeated year after year, but all missionary reports are more or less incomplete.

SCOTLAND.

The Churches of Scotland return their communicant membership as follows :—

Established Church	656,112
United Free Church	495,174
Episcopal Church	46,440
Congregationalists	30,170
Baptists	16,899
Methodists	10,899
	1,259,594

The total (voluntary) income of the Presbyterian Churches is as follows :—

Established Church	£492,816
United Free Church	1,098,663

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* These figures do not include 4,000,000 of Evangelical Protestant communicants in the United States belonging to the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and other Evangelical churches.

TRAINING COLLEGES OPEN TO FREE CHURCHMEN.

WESTMINSTER and SOUTHLANDS are Wesleyan institutions. Among the arrangements "deemed indispensable" by the Wesleyan Committee of Education is the following: "Every teacher employed in the schools, or trained for them, shall be of a decidedly religious character." Apart from any other reasons that are advanced in favour of such a restriction, it is urged that the number of candidates for admission into Training Colleges is so large, that to admit others than Wesleyans would be an injustice to candidates in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Society.

The BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY has two colleges for men, at Isleworth and Bangor, and four colleges for women—at Stockwell, Darlington, Saffron Walden, and Swansea.

Pupil teachers who have successfully completed their term of apprenticeship, or terminate the engagement with the consent of the managers, and those who, not having been pupil teachers, will be more than eighteen years of age on the 1st of September, 1902, may make application for admission, on a form which will be supplied to applicants. The names of candidates must be notified to the Education Department before October 1st, 1901. The Society require that the teachers to whose education they contribute should be able and willing to conduct schools in a Christian and unsectarian spirit. While no test is imposed, and no particular religious profession insisted on, the Committee desires to train truly religious teachers, who can make the children acquainted with the truths of Scripture, without imparting any sectarian bias. To this end it must be understood that Biblical study forms part of the college curriculum.

Applicants who are prepared to stay at college for two academical years, and who furnish satisfactory evidence of freedom from serious bodily defect or deformity, of sound health, of good character, and of aptitude for teaching, will be placed on the list of candidates.

The students are chosen from among the successful candidates (except a few who have already obtained some university or other distinction), but success in the examination alone is not sufficient to qualify for admission, and rejection may be necessary on grounds of either want of room in the college, or of ill-health or unfitness on the part of the candidate. An entrance fee must be paid in full by students on admission, but they are at no charge for instruction, board, lodging, washing, and medical attendance. Students' friends are expected to provide for them during the holidays. The Committee reserves the right to require any student to withdraw before the end of the course (without return of fee) if misconduct, loss of health, insufficient progress in scholarship, or other cause should make such withdrawal desirable. The students assemble in September, and disperse immediately after the Government examinations at midsummer. Holidays are given also at Christmas and in the spring. Students whose homes are within easy reach of the college are occasionally allowed to spend Saturday afternoon and Sunday with their relatives. Those who remain in the college during Sunday are expected to attend regularly some place of worship, the choice being left to themselves.

Some "day students" are admitted at Stockwell, Swansea, and Saffron Walden. The Government arranges with the colleges for the tuition of day students, and gives a bursary for maintenance of £25 a year to men and £20 to women. Residence in college is not only cheaper but more advantageous. Those who desire admission to any of the above-mentioned colleges may apply, in the first instance, to Mr. Bourne at 114-116, Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue, London, E.C.

The entrance fees are as follows:—Stockwell, £25; Isleworth, £25; Darlington, £20; Swansea, £20; Saffron Waldon, £25; Bangor, £17 10s. Students have also to pay for their own books.

There is also an undenominational college for women at Edge Hill, near Liverpool.

HOMERTON NEW COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.—This college, which is an undenominational institution, though founded and managed by the Congregational Board of Education, was established in Homerton in 1843, by the Congregational Union, but in recent years has been removed to buildings which were formerly known as Cavendish College, Cambridge. Treasurer, Mr. S. Hope Morley; chairman of the board, Mr. G. D. Jennings, B.A.; Principal, Mr. John C. Horobin, M.A. Income, £7,455, with an overdrawn balance of £646. Number of students, about 154. The object of the college is to train young women to become teachers in public schools. Good moral character is indispensable; but students need not be members of any particular Church.

Application for admission may be made personally or by letter to the Principal. Approved candidates are presented for the "Admission Examination." The Board, however, reserve to themselves the power of dismissing a student at any period of the course.

An examination of candidates for admission is annually held at the college in December, which extends to the subjects required in the course of a pupil teacher's engagement. The nature of this examination may be ascertained from the "Examination Questions" of a previous year, issued in May, free by post, 7½d.

The period of training is generally two years. A fee of £23 is paid on admission. Lodging, board, instruction, medical attendance, and laundry are provided, except for holidays extending over seven days.

Provision is made for University courses.

FREE CHURCH SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

GENERAL.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD NONCONFORMIST GRAMMAR SCHOOL. An unsectarian Public School. Reduction to ministers' sons of 15 per cent., except extras. For every fifteen boarders paying full fees a minister's son is elected at half-fees, preference to those from the Eastern counties. Head master, Mr. F. S. Young, M.A.; Secretary, Mr. R. Pearce, Church Court, Old Jewry, E.C.

BLACKHEATH HOME AND SCHOOL FOR THE SONS AND ORPHANS OF MISSIONARIES. Established 1842. Sons of all Evangelical missionaries connected with British Societies eligible for admission. Parents or guardians pay £18 for boys under ten, and £21 above. Two leaving Scholarships, each £50 for two years, open to sons of missionaries only. Pupils other than sons of missionaries admitted on terms to be had from the Head Master, Mr. W. B. Hayward, M.A.; Secretaries, Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, 14, Blomfield Street, E.C., and Mr. A. H. Baynes, 19, Furnival Street, E.C.; Treasurer, Mr. Edward Unwin, 27, Pilgrim Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

MILL HILL SCHOOL. Founded 1807, Reconstituted 1869. A Public School. Entrance Scholarships of £30 to £90 a year are tenable as long as the holders remain in the school. Other Scholarships tenable at London, Oxford, or Cambridge Universities. Head Master, Mr. J. D. McClure, M.A., LL.D. (Trinity College, Cambridge); Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. W. B. Buckland, Mill Hill, N.W.

TAUNTON INDEPENDENT COLLEGE. Established 1847. Affiliated by royal charter to the University of London. Several entrance and leaving Scholarships. Head Master, Mr. Charles D. Whittaker, M.A. and LL.M. (Camb.), B.A. and B.Sc. (Lond.); Secretary, Mr. Albert Goodman, 3, Hammet Street, Taunton.

TETTENHALL COLLEGE, Staffordshire. Pupils prepared for the Universities. Laboratory, carpenter's workshop, engineering department, two playfields, museum, swimming-bath, and gymnasium. Head Master, Mr. J. H. Haydon, M.A., late Scholar and Prizeman of King's College, Cambridge, University Scholar, and Gold Medallist in Classics, and M.A. in French and German of the University of London. Secretary, Rev. Alfred Thompson, Tettenhall College, Wolverhampton.

CHRIST'S COLLEGE, Blackheath, S.E. Principal, Rev. F. W Aveling, M.A., B.Sc. The building stands on gravel soil. The spacious grounds include a large cricket and football field, playground, gymnasium, cottage hospital, school chapel. There are four chemical laboratories, science room, fitted up with instruments for teaching light, heat, and electricity, room for photography, two carpenters' shops, swimming bath.

WALTHAMSTOW HALL, Sevenoaks. For the education of the daughters of missionaries. Fees: under twelve, fifteen guineas per annum; over twelve, twenty guineas; and £31 for those entering above that age. President and Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Pye-Smith, 6, The Grove, Highgate, N.; Lady Principal, Miss Miller; Secretary, Miss Goodman, 5, Brunswick Road, Kingston Hill, S.W.

CONGREGATIONAL.

CATERHAM SCHOOL FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE SONS OF MINISTERS. Head Master, Rev. Horace E. Hall, M.A. (Lond.); Secretary, Rev. Henry Grainger. A limited number of pupils not sons of ministers are received from forty-two guineas per year. The school is intended for 150 scholars, but an increased income of £1,000 is absolutely necessary to meet expenditure if the full number are admitted. Office, No. 42, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

MILTON MOUNT COLLEGE, Gravesend, for the education of daughters of Congregational ministers. Chairman of General Board of Management, Rev. Charles Wilson, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. T. L. Devitt; Secretary, Rev. D. M. Jenkins, 5, Keith Grove, Uxbridge Road, W.; Head Mistress, Miss Conder (Classical Tripos, Camb.). A limited number of laymen's daughters are received.

NORTHERN CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOL, Silcoates Hall, Wakefield. Treasurer, Mr. T. P. Robinson, Wakefield; Hon. Finance Secretaries, Rev. G. Slack, Cleckheaton, and for Lancashire only, Rev. G. E Cheeseman Huyton, Liverpool; Principal, Mr. J. A. Yonge, M.A. This institution was established in 1831 for the sons of ministers and missionaries. In the year 1856 it was determined to admit the sons of laymen on terms which, while moderate, were yet remunerative; and for the past thirty-five years the sons both of ministers and laymen have been eligible.

WESLEYAN.

THE LEYS SCHOOL, Cambridge. About 150 boys are in residence Head Master, Rev. W. T. A. Barber, M.A. This school is of comparatively recent foundation, but already ranks among the first public schools of the country.

WESTMINSTER TRAINING COLLEGE FOR SCHOOLMASTERS. Principal, Rev. James H. Rigg, D.D.; Secretary, Rev. D. J. Waller, D.D.; Vice-Principal, Mr. H. A. Reatchlous, M.A., B.Sc. The college accommodates 131 students.

SOUTHLANDS TRAINING COLLEGE FOR SCHOOLMISTRESSES. Principal, Rev. James Chapman; Secretary, Rev. D. J. Waller, D.D.; Head Master, Mr. James Bailey; Lady Superintendent, Miss M. A. Sargent. The college accommodates 109 students; 109 students are now in residence; also one day student.

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL, Landsdown, Bath, for the sons of ministers. Head Master, Walter P. Workman, M.A., B.Sc.

TRINITY HALL SCHOOL, Southport, for the daughters of ministers. Secretary, Rev. John Kinnings, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

WOODHOUSE GROVE, near Leeds. Head Master, Dr. Arthur Vinter.

KENT COLLEGE, Canterbury. Head Master, Mr. F. M. Facer, B.A.

KENT COLLEGE, Folkestone. Head Mistress, Miss Brunyate.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, Taunton. Head Master, Mr. Arthur S. Haslam, M.A.

VICTORIA COLLEGE, Congleton. Head Master, Mr. Llewellyn Mayson Penn, M.A.

TROWBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL. Head Master, W. P. Fuller, M.A.

OTHER METHODIST CHURCHES.

SHEBBEAR COLLEGE, Devonshire (Bible Christian). Head Master, Mr. T. Ruddle, B.A.

ASHVILLE COLLEGE, Harrogate (United Methodist Free Churches). Head Master, Dr. Bowick; Secretary, Rev. John Moore, Harrogate.

ELMFIELD COLLEGE, York, for boys (Primitive Methodist).

BOURNE COLLEGE, Birmingham, for boys (Primitive Methodist).

BALA PREPARATORY SCHOOL (Calvinistic Methodist).

MINISTERIAL COLLEGES.

CONGREGATIONAL.

NEW COLLEGE, South Hampstead. Principal, Rev. R. Vaughan Pryce, M.A., LL.B.; Chairman, Rev. R. T. Verrall, B.A.; Treasurer, Mr. Henry Spicer, B.A.; Secretary, Rev. Howard Staines, B.A., B.D., New College. Income from ordinary sources, £3,721 2s. 4d. New College, established under that name in 1850, combines the following institutions for the training of Congregational ministers: Congregational United Board (1696), King's Head Academy, Homerton, Coward, Hoxton, and Highbury Colleges. Number of students, 44.

WESTERN COLLEGE, Plymouth (with which is incorporated the British Theological Institute). Principal, Rev. C. Chapman, M.A., LL.D.; Chairman, Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, M.A., Bristol; Treasurer, Mr. J. Jackson, J.P., Torrington, Devon; Hon. Secretary, Rev. J. Charteris Johnston, Mount Warren, Torquay; Finance Secretaries, Rev. C. J. Palmer, Devonport, and Rev. T. B. Knight, 45, Apsley Road, Clifton, Bristol. Income, £1,667 19s. 1d. Number of students, 17.

YORKSHIRE UNITED COLLEGE. Principal, D. W. Simon, M.A., Ph.D., D.D.; Treasurer, Mr. John Whitely, J.P., West House, Halifax; Secretaries, Rev. James Browne, B.A., 2, Cunliffe Road, Bradford, and Rev. Thomas Warren, Parkgate, Rotherham; Chairman of governing body, Rev. Thos. Nicholson, Rotherham; Deputy-Chairman, the Rev. E. A. Lawrence, Halifax. By an order of the Charity Commissioners, dated February 17th, 1888, the Rotherham and Airedale Colleges were amalgamated and became one institution under the name of the Yorkshire Independent College, and the operations of the United College have since been carried on at Bradford in the building hitherto known as the Airedale College.

CHESHUNT COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. O. C. Whitehouse, M.A., D.D.; Treasurer, Mr. Samuel Smith; Secretaries, Rev. R. Lovett, M.A., and Rev. Alfred Thompson. Office, 36, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C. Income, from subscriptions, donations, and congregational collections, £629 11s. 11d., and from endowments and students' payments, £2,036 6s. 6d. This college is not exclusively denominational. Number of students, 31.

HACKNEY COLLEGE, Hampstead, N.W. Principal, Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D. (Aber.); Treasurer, Mr. W. Marten Smith, 18, Cedars Road, Clapham Common, S.W.; Secretary, Rev. John Nunn, 6, Maitland Park Villas, Haverstock Hill, N.W. Expenditure for college purposes, £2,754 7s. 1d. Number of students, 24.

LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. Caleb Scott, B.A., LL.B., D.D.; Chairman, Rev. Dr. Goodrich; Treasurer, Mr. T. H. Rymer, Manchester; Honorary Secretary, Rev. T. Kilpin Higgs, M.A., Oldham; Financial Secretary and Librarian, Mr. Charles Goodyear, 39, Lincroft Street, Moss Side, Manchester. This college originated in the private instruction given to ministers by the late Rev. W. Roby, of Manchester. It was constituted a public institution in 1816. Number of students, 37.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, Oxford. Principal, Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, M.A., D.D., LL.D.; Chairman of Council and of Educational Board, Rev. Dr. Mackennal, Bowdon, Cheshire; Treasurer, Mr. Albert Spicer, J.P., 50, Upper Thames Street, E.C.; Secretary, Mr. Norman H. Smith, M.A., Mansfield College, Oxford. This college, which was founded at Oxford in 1886, owes its origin to the action of the trustees and council of Springhill College, Birmingham, who removed it to Oxford. The college is purely theological and non-residential. All its students must become members of Oxford University.

CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THEOLOGICAL AND MISSIONARY TRAINING, Nottingham. Principal, Rev. J. A. Mitchell, B.A.; Chairman, ; Treasurer, Mr. W. Goddard; Organising and Financial Secretary, Rev. F. Robinson. The design of the Institute is to train pastors, evangelists, and town, congregational, and colonial missionaries. Number of students, 66. Income, £2,000.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, Carmarthen. Principal, Mr. Walter J. Evans, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. G. Phillips, Hall Street, Carmarthen; Honorary Secretary, Rev. D. J. Thomas, Carmarthen. This college educates 29 Congregational students, and there is a special fund for their support.

BRECON MEMORIAL COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. D. Rowlands, B.A.; Treasurer, Mr. T. Williams, J.P., Merthyr Tydfil; Secretary, Rev. D. A. Griffith, Garth, Breconshire; Financial Secretary, Rev. D. A. Griffith. Receipts, £1,504 16s. 2½d. Number of students, 38.

BALA-BANGOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. L. Probert, D.D.; Treasurer, Mr. W. J. Williams, Carnarvon; Secretary, Rev. D. Rees, Capel Mawr, Anglesey. The establishment was formed through the amalgamation of institutions formerly carried on at Bangor and Bala. Number of students, 25.

BAPTIST.

BRISTOL COLLEGE. President, Rev. W. J. Henderson, B.A.; Treasurer, Mr. E. Robinson, J.P., Bristol; Secretary, Rev. R. Glover, D.D., 15, Westfield Park, Bristol; Financial Secretary, Rev. H. Knee, 5, Ashley Road, Bristol. Income, £938 0s. 0d. Number of students, 23.

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. T. V. Tymms, D.D.; Treasurer, Mr. J. S. Smith, J.P., Mountsorrel, Loughborough; Hon. Secretaries, Rev. W. Evans, Leicester (Candidates), Rev. J. R. Godfrey, Barlestone (General), and Mr. S. Hall, Derby (Finance). Income, £938 0s. 0d. Number of students, 13.

Rawdon College, near Leeds. President, Rev. T. V. Tymms, D.D.; Treasurers, Sir John Barran, Bart., Leeds, and Mr. W. Town, Bingley; Secretary, Rev. C. W. Skemp, Bradford; Financial Secretaries, Rev. D. Glass, M.A., Rawdon, and Mr. W. R. Bilbrough, Leeds. Income, £2,120 13s. 1d. Number of students, 25.

Regent's Park College. Principal, Rev. G. P. Gould, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. E. B. Underhill, LL.D.; Secretary, Rev. W. W. Sidey, Chapel House, Tottenham. Income, £4,514 0s. 0d. Number of students, 28.

Pastor's College, Newington Butts. President, Rev. Thomas Spurgeon; Principal, Rev. Alex. McCaig, B.A., LL.D.; Secretary, Mr. E. H. Bartlett. Income, £3,119 13s. 1d. Number of students, 60.

Manchester College. President, Rev. J. T. Marshall, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. W. D. Shaw, J.P., Huddersfield; Secretary, Rev. J. S. Hughes. Number of students, 18.

Cardiff. President, Rev. W. Edwards, B.A., D.D.; Chairman, Mr. H. Phillips, J.P., Newport; Treasurer, Mr. Councillor W. Edwards, J.P., Maindee, Newport; Secretaries, Revs. D. B. Jones, J.P., Caerleon, Mon., and W. Morris, F.R.G.S., Treorchy R.S.O., Glam. Income, £1,267 19s. 6d. Number of students, 22.

Bangor. Principal, Rev. S. Morris, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. R. Beck, Bangor; General Secretary, Rev. J. Griffiths, Llanfairfechan. Income, £1,228 10s. 11d. Number of students, 20.

PRESBYTERIAN.

Westminster College, Cambridge. Principal, Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, M.A., D.D.,; Secretary of Board, Rev. John Reid, M.A.

WESLEYAN.

Richmond. Governor, Rev. George Fletcher; Secretary, Rev. J. Banham, Glenbank, The Chase, Clapham, S.W.

Didsbury. ; Secretary, Rev. Jeremiah Dodsworth, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Randles, Manchester.

Headingley. Governors, Rev. G. Stringer Rowe and Prof. Banks.

Birmingham. Governor, Rev. Thomas Allen, D.D.; Secretary, Rev. Henry Elderkin, Connaught Road, Wolverhampton.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST.

BALA COLLEGE. Acting Principal, Rev. Ellis Edwards, M.A.; Treasurer, J. R. Davies, Esq., Ceris, Bangor; Secretary, Rev. R. H. Morgan, M.A., Upper Bangor.

TREVECCA COLLEGE. Principal, Rev. O. Prys, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. Edward Jones, J.P., Trewythen; Secretary, Rev. Rees Evans, Llanwrtyd.

OTHER METHODIST COLLEGES.

RANMOOR COLLEGE, Sheffield (Methodist New Connexion). Principal, Rev. J. S. Clemens, B.A., B.D.; Treasurer, Mr. J. J. Fox, J.P., Bridge House, Batley; Secretary, Rev. J. Medicraft.

MANCHESTER COLLEGE (Primitive Methodist). Principal, Rev. George Parkin, B.D.; Treasurer, Mr. T. Beeley, J.P., Gee's Cross, Manchester; Secretary, Rev. J. Welford.

MANCHESTER COLLEGE (United Methodist Free Churches), Principal, Rev. Thomas Sherwood: Treasurer, Alderman James Duckworth; Secretary, Rev. W. H. C. Harris, Waterloo Road, Burslem.

SENATUS ACADEMICUS OF THE ASSOCIATED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, BRITISH AND COLONIAL.

CONSTITUTION.—The Senatus consists of the Professors of the Associated Colleges, together with a delegation of three other gentlemen from each college, and such ministers as hold the diploma of Fellow. It is empowered to institute examinations in Theological and Biblical subjects, including Ethical Philosophy and Church History; and to grant certificates to those candidates who pass such examinations.

EXAMINATION FOR THE DIPLOMA OF ASSOCIATE (A.T.S.).—Candidates are required to show a competent knowledge of Apologetical and Doctrinal Theology, Exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, Homiletics, Church History, and Philosophy. If in one of the associated colleges, they must produce certificates of character and standing from the tutors; if ministers, from the Secretary of the Baptist Union or of the County Association. Prizes are awarded to present students who distinguish themselves in the examination.

EXAMINATION FOR THE DIPLOMA OF FELLOW (F.T.S).—Associates may gain this by satisfying the examiners in two separate years as to two or more of these branches:—Hebrew and Chaldee, Greek

Testament, Septuagint, and Vulgate, Theology, History of Christianity, &c., Apologetics.

Sixteen colleges are now members of the Senatus Academicus.

It is under consideration to apply for power to grant degrees.

SETTLEMENTS.

Bermondsey (Wesleyan). Warden, Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A.; Treasurer, Rev. Walford Green; Secretary, Rev. James Hope Moulton, M.A. This Settlement was established nine years ago in the poorest district of south-east London. It is a Hall of Residence, where members of the Universities and others may live in order to devote their leisure to work among the poor. It has a lecture-hall, library, gymnasium, and other rooms where religious, educational, and social work is carried on. At present about twelve men are in residence with the Warden. A Home for Women is connected with the Settlement, where about ten ladies reside.

Mansfield House, Canning Town, London, E. In connection with Mansfield College, Oxford. President, Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.; Warden, Mr. Percy Alden, M.A.; Treasurer, Mr. Joseph King, M.A., Lower Birtley, Godalming; Secretary, Mr. W. Forstère Bovill, M.A., Mansfield House. This Settlement was established ten years ago. The Public Hall seats 1,200 people, and in the spacious rooms of the residence a large amount of religious, educational, and social work is carried on. There is a large men's club, a boys' club, a big lodging-house for working men, a children's country holiday fund, a picture exhibition, and other useful institutions connected with Mansfield House.

Browning Hall, York Street, Walworth Road, London, S.E. Chairman of Committee, Mr. Arnold Pye-Smith, J.P.; Settlement Staff: Warden, Rev. F. Herbert Stead, M.A.; President of Women's Department, Mrs. Stead; Sub-Warden, Rev. Tom Bryan, M.A.; Secretary, Mr. J. C. Mather, 69, Queen's Road, Peckham, S.E.

Settlement of Women Workers, 461, Barking Road, Canning Town, London, E. President, the Countess of Aberdeen; Chief Resident Worker, Miss Cheetham; Resident Medical Superintendent, Miss Edith Hudson, M.B., C.M. (Edin.); Hon. Secs., Miss Shepheard (Financial) and Miss C. Spicer; Treasurer, Mr. W. Hazell.

Middlesbrough Women's Settlement, 158, Newport Road. President, Mrs. Armitage; Secretary, Miss Moore, Ashburton

Terrace; Financial Secretary, Miss H. M. Wilson, Southfield Villas; Lady Superintendent, Miss Harris.

LANCASHIRE COLLEGE SETTLEMENT, Hulme. President, Rev. Principal Scott, B.A., LL.B., D.D.; Warden, Mr. T. T. James, B.A., Hulme; General Secretary, Mr. Andrew Warren, Independent College, Manchester; Treasurer, Mr. E. D. Pochin; Secretary of Women's Branch, Miss Williams, Sunnyside, Upper Chorlton Road, Manchester.

FREE CHURCH ORGANISATIONS.

DISSENTING DEPUTIES. Chairman, ; Deputy-Chairman, Mr. Alderman Evan Spicer, J.P.; Treasurer, Mr. William Holborn; Secretary, Mr. Alfred J. Shepheard, 6, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C. This Association originated in a General Meeting of the Protestant Dissenters of London, held in November, 1732, called to consider an application to Parliament for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. The want of a permanent body to superintend the civil concerns of Dissenters being strongly felt, it was resolved at a subsequent meeting, held in January, 1735-36, that Deputies from the several congregations in London should be chosen for that purpose. The present duty with which the Deputies charge themselves is to see that the Civil and Religious Rights of Dissenters are not infringed, and to help in pushing forward Parliamentary measures which will promote the interests of Nonconformists.

GENERAL BODY OF PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS OF THE THREE DENOMINATIONS (London and Westminster). The three Boards of Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist ministers, resident in and about the cities of London and Westminster, were formed in the early part of the eighteenth century. These bodies were accustomed to unite in presenting addresses to the throne on suitable occasions, from the date of the Revolution, but were not organised into one "General Body" till July 11th, 1727. At that time it was agreed, and the rule continues still in force, "That no person be allowed to join with the body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers in any public act, but such as are approved by one or other of the three." The business of the General Body is conducted by a committee chosen from the three denominations, which meets as occasion requires. Secretary, Rev. William Pierce, 62, Fordwych Road, West Hampstead, N.W.; Clerk, Mr. J. Minshull, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.

MERCHANTS' LECTURE. Founded 1672. To uphold the doctrines of the Reformation against the error of Popery, Socinianism, and Infidelity. Present lecturers: Revs. J. M. Gibbon, Newman Hall,

LL.B., D.D., W. Hardy Harwood, J. Guinness Rogers, B.A., D.D., A. Rowland, B.A., LL.B. Lectures on Tuesday at 12.30 o'clock in the Dutch Church, Austin Friars. Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. Knox Wilson, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES. President, Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A.; President-Elect, Rev. W. J. Townsend, D.D.; Secretary, Rev. J. Monro Gibson, D.D.; Organising Secretary, Rev. Thomas Law, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C. The objects of the National Council are: (*a*) To facilitate fraternal intercourse and co-operation among the Evangelical Free Churches. (*b*) To assist in the organisation of local Councils. (*c*) To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the Churches. (*d*) To advocate the New Testament doctrine of the Church, and to defend the rights of the associated Churches. (*e*) To promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. Objects: (1) To promote a system of national education which shall be efficient, progressive, and unsectarian, and shall be under proper control; and also to oppose all legislative and administrative proposals having a contrary tendency. (2) To secure the universal establishment of School Boards in districts of suitable area, and having under their control unsectarian schools within reasonable reach of the population requiring them. (3) To secure Free Schools, on the condition that every school receiving a grant in lieu of fees shall be under public representative management during the ordinary school hours. (4) To obtain facilities for the better training of elementary teachers in unsectarian institutions, under public management. Secretaries, Messrs. T. E. Minshull and A. J. Mundella, Surrey House, Victoria Embankment, E.C. This Society is not, strictly speaking, a Free Church Organisation.

SOCIETY FOR THE LIBERATION OF RELIGION FROM STATE-PATRONAGE AND CONTROL, 2, Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, London, E.C. Chairman of Parliamentary Committee, Mr. J. Carvell Williams; Secretaries, Mr. John Fisher and Mr. Sydney Robjohns; Editor, Mr. Howard Evans. Monthly organ, *The Liberator*. The Society—which was formed in 1844—is based on the principle that National Establishments of Religion are unjust; are politically and socially mischievous; are injurious to the Churches established, and hinder the progress of religion. Its objects are: (1) The abrogation of all laws and usages which inflict disability, or confer privilege, on ecclesiastical grounds, upon any subject of the realm. (2) The discontinuance of all payments from public funds, and of all compulsory exactions, for religious purposes. (3) After an equitable satisfaction of existing interests, the application to strictly national purposes of the national property now devoted to the uses of the

Church of England and the Church of Scotland; and, concurrently therewith, the liberation of those Churches from State-control. The Society is strictly unsectarian, and neither expresses any opinion upon, nor seeks to effect any alteration in, the doctrines, formularies, or internal government of the Churches now established. It supplies, without charge, legal and other advice in regard to all local matters involving the interests of religious equality—assistance which is of great importance, especially in rural parishes. The Society provides lecturers and speakers for public meetings, and lends its popular lecture lantern slides without charge.

THE IMPERIAL PROTESTANT FEDERATION (embracing twenty-two Societies). Formed in 1898 to Federate the Protestant Party, and to Organise the Constituencies so as to secure an Effective Representation of the Protestant Electors in Parliament. Chairman, Colonel T. Myles Sandys, M.P.; Secretary, Edward H. Garbett; Organising Secretary, James W. Walsh; Offices, 3, Palmer Street, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.

ADDRESSES OF OFFICIALS OF FREE CHURCH DENOMINATIONS.

Baptist.

President—Rev. Alexander Maclaren, B.A., D.D., 1, Carill Drive, Fallowfield, Manchester
Vice-President—
Secretary—Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., 19, Furnival Street, E.C.
Secretary of Missionary Society—Mr. A. H. Baynes, 19, Furnival Street, E.C.
Hon. Secretary of Total Abstinence Association—Mr. J. T. Sears, J.P., 11, Crane Court, Fleet Street
Hon. Secretary of Tract and Book Society—Mr. H. G. Dallimore, 15, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.
Secretary of Bible Translation Society—Rev. W. Hill, 19, Furnival Street, E.C.
Secretary of Deaconesses' Home and Mission—Rev. E. Henderson, 21, Victoria Road, Clapham, S.W.

Congregational.

Chairman—Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., City Temple, London, E.C.
Chairman Elect—
Secretary—Rev. W. J. Woods, B.A., Memorial Hall, London, E.C.
Publication Department—Mr. H. Thacker, Memorial Hall
Secretaries of London Missionary Society—Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, Rev. A. N. Johnson, M.A., and Rev. G. Cousins, Blomfield Street, E.C.
Secretary of Church Aid Society—Rev. J. E. Flower, M.A., Memorial Hall
Secretary of London Congregational Union—Rev. A. Mearns, Memorial Hall
Secretary of Colonial Missionary Society—Rev. D. Burford Hooke, Memorial Hall
Secretary of English Chapel Building Society—Mr. C. E. Conder, Memorial Hall
Secretary of Total Abstinence Association—Rev. W. Mottram, Memorial Hall

Presbyterian Church.

Moderator—Rev. J. Watson, M.A., D.D., 18, Sefton Drive, Liverpool
General Secretary—Rev. J. Thoburn McGaw, D.D., 7, East India Avenue, E.C.
Financial Secretary—Mr. John Leggat, 7, East India Avenue
Publishing Agent—Mr. T. F. Downie, 14, Paternoster Square, E.C.
Book Room—14, Paternoster Square
Home Mission Convener—Sir George Bruce, 64, Boundary Row, N.W.
Foreign Mission Convener—Rev. A. Connell, M.A., B.D., 39, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.
Secretary, Presbyterian Alliance—Rev. G. D. Mathews, D.D., 25, Christchurch Avenue, Brondesbury, N.W.

Wesleyan Methodist Church.

President—Rev. Dr. Allen, Handsworth College, Birmingham
Secretary—Rev. Marshall Hartley, 1, Nightingale Lane, Balham, S.W.
Secretaries of Missionary Society—Revs. Frederic W. Macdonald, William Perkins, Marshall Hartley, and William H. Findlay, M.A., Centenary Hall, Bishopsgate Street, London, E.C.
Secretary of Home Mission Fund—Rev. H. J. Pope, D.D., Centenary Hall

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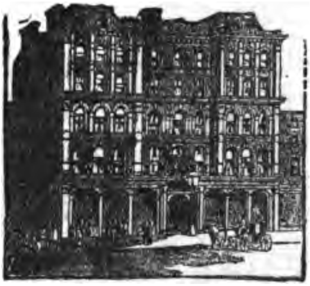

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